THE LIFE OF FLORENCE L. BARCLAY

By ONE OF HER DAUGHTERS

Edith M. Thomas
26-11-27

THE LIFE OF FLORENCE L. BARCLAY

BY FLORENCE L. BARCLAY

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Yours most sincerely,

Florence L. Barclay

THE LIFE OF
FLORENCE L. BARCLAY

A Study in Personality

By
ONE OF
HER DAUGHTERS

G. P. Putnam's Sons
London & New York

Lord Tennyson's poem, "Crossing the Bar," is printed by kind permission of Messrs. Macmillan & Co.

First Published September 1921
Popular Edition August 1924
Reprinted . February 1925
Reprinted . January 1926
Reprinted . November 1926
Reprinted May 1927

MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY THE GARDEN CITY PRESS LTD.,
LETCHWORTH, HERTS.

TO MY FATHER

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F. L. B.

BORN DECEMBER 2, 1862

MARRIED MARCH 10, 1881
to the Rev. Charles W. Barclay

'CALLED HOME" MARCH 10, 1921

—

"O early ripe! to thy abundant store
What could advancing age have added more?"
Dryden.

I: CHILDHOOD'S MEMORIES

AN old red-brick rectory in a little Surrey village—that was always "home" to my mother. The memory of those first seven years of her life, tinged as they were with a sense of romance, hallowed by the first strong love of a child's heart, remained to the end among her most cherished thoughts. She loved to speak of Limpsfield, of "home"; to live over again in memory quaint little incidents of childhood, and feel again as she felt at six years old. To the end of her life—and especially towards the end—the memories of those early years were the most vivid, the most fresh, and, I think, the sweetest she had. Always she kept her child's heart, her child's boundless enthusiasm and joy in life, and it was this that made her feel most "at home" in the memory of all the surroundings and incidents of her childhood's days.

She had a kind of kinship with her six-year-old self; a sense that it was her most real self, and that though she had apparently grown up and become the centre of innumerable

activities and responsibilities, still she was really at heart "Benny," the small, bright-eyed heroine of the early fancies and realities that merged into each other so easily, and had as their setting the square, red-brick house among its tall elm-trees, with a white ribbon of road winding away to Titsey, and just across it, the stone steps leading up to the church yard, with its old lych gate, and the little old grey church.

It is mainly because these memories are so real a part of my mother's personality that I am going to recount them; for in themselves they are slight, quaint, whimsical, and can scarcely be compared with the historical data that form the early chapters of most biographies. But of course this book is not meant to be classed with formal biographies at all: anything as conventional as that would seem, somehow, out of place to those who knew and loved the vivid, unconventional, child-like personality that was my mother. That is why I have called the book just "a study in personality."

The best thing about her was not what she wrote or what she did or said, but simply what she *was*. Her personality was like the sun—

the sun she loved so much—for it seemed to give light and warmth wherever she went, making others feel more alive, more glad to be alive. She had a radiant and irrepressible joy in life; an unquenchable enthusiasm for everything and everybody; a firm faith in God, and in man's possibilities, which tended to bring out the best in others, the most joyous, the most true. It was precisely all this—her personality, in short—which broke forth in her books and won for her a vast reading public that looked upon her as a friend.

It is for these her friends that I would paint the portrait of her who loved them all, known and unknown, and desired from the bottom of her heart to give them joy and interest and hope. It is also for her sake, because I know that she would like to be remembered.

Once again I say it—this book has no pretensions; it is meant simply for her friends: but Florence L. Barclay was ready to admit the whole world to her friendship.

And so, to introduce her more intimately to those who desire to know her thus, I must go back to the early days that left so strong an impression in her mind. And what I tell are just her own memories, told as she told

them to me at one time or another—and as a story-teller she was unequalled, because of her scrupulous regard for truth, her horror of exaggeration, her accurate memory and her true artist's grasp of essentials.

"Benny," as her mother called her (perhaps because she was more like a very active small boy than a mid-Victorian small girl; or perhaps because Mrs. Charlesworth had longed so greatly for a son), was a very unusual child. Her big brown eyes, pencilled black eyebrows, marked features, ruddy complexion and shock of curly dark hair gave her almost an Italian appearance. A big, radiant smile added light and life to her face, which was seldom without it. She had taught herself to read by the time she was three years old: in fact she could not remember being unable to read. Her vivid imagination was never still: always she was making up a story or a game; pretending to be somebody or something; and her imagination was not altogether under control, as some of her strange memories will show. She must have been rather a contrast to her quiet elder sister, Annie, four years her senior, and often have led her little sister, Maudie, into perilous

adventures and scrapes. In fact once the nurses missed little "Miss Maud," and after a frantic search came on two small, fat legs, in blue stockings, projecting from a drain-pipe down which "Miss Florrie" had ordered her small sister to crawl, being just too big to do so herself, and yet desirous of knowing what it was like inside a drain-pipe!

The Rectory had a nice, old-fashioned garden, and every corner of it had its own associations, and almost a sense of mystery and romance to Benny, as she played busily in it from morning till night. She had such a real sense of kinship with everything, animate and inanimate, that the world seemed literally peopled with friends. The flowers each had their own characters and personalities. There was a tall, proud tiger-lily that was a domineering autocrat in a certain border, and that she hated and feared. One day, with the sense of being a deliverer of the oppressed smaller flowers, with the daring of a Jack-the-giant-killer, five-year-old Benny advanced upon the tiger-lily, with a little iron spade, and slew him. It was a fearful thing to have done and remained a lasting memory.

But towards the lonely, starved-looking scare-

crow in the kitchen garden she felt nothing but love; and, too, inexpressible pity, because as he stood there, spreading thin, flapping arms in the wind, at dusk, he seemed so utterly alone. And so every night she prayed for him, and when her mother remonstrated—"But he's so *lonely*," pleaded Benny, and still continued to ask God to bless him, every night.

Simply nothing would have surprised Benny, and she had somewhat weird ideas of the laws of nature. One day her mother took her for a long drive in the little pony-chaise to call upon a neighbouring vicar's wife. The vicar's wife seems to have left no impression at all upon small Benny. Not so the moon. For that night, as the little chaise crawled homewards along the quiet roads, the moon behaved in a very strange way. It came down very, very low all among the rustling black trees. "Oh, mamma," whispered Benny, awe-struck, from the little low seat of the pony-chaise, "if you tried you could touch the moon with the whip."

"Benny mustn't be a silly little girl," said her mother reprovingly.

"But I *know* you *could* touch the moon,

to-night, if only you'd try with the whip," persisted Benny.

But her mother wouldn't try, and the fat pony ambled on, and Benny finally reached home and went to bed with a sense of a great opportunity missed; and for years she believed firmly that the moon *had* come down quite low on that particular night, and that her mother might have touched it.

The Reverend Samuel Charlesworth was a man of reserved, undemonstrative nature. He had married very late in life, and had already acquired the habits of a confirmed bachelor. He would spend most of his day alone in his study. But there was one thing he enjoyed doing in company with his family—reading aloud. A few years after Charles Kingsley's classical fairy tale, "Water Babies," came out, Mr. Charlesworth read it aloud to his wife and a visitor staying in the house. Benny was playing on the floor in a corner of the room, but at the same time she was listening, and presently she stopped playing and became absorbed in the fascinating adventure that was befalling the grimy little boy called *Tom*. To her it was the true history of a most desirable event—just the kind of thing one would expect *would* happen, only

as a rule grown-ups didn't treat such possibilities seriously. She crawled across the floor to her father's feet, and fixed her big brown eyes on his face, drinking in every word. Then and there she made up her mind that she would never spend a single penny again until she had enough money saved up to buy the book about Tom and the sea people so that it might be her very own. And she carried out her intention. Month after month passed, and every penny was hoarded in a secret place, until at last with her own money she was able to buy a copy of the book, and could read and re-read it to her heart's content. That book always remained a great treasure.

It was during this reading aloud that an incident occurred which shows the secret workings of a child's mind. In one of the early chapters occurs this phrase: "A keeper is only a poacher turned outside in, and a poacher a keeper turned inside out." Mr. Charlesworth read the little aphorism with enjoyment, and the listeners laughed. "That's very clever," he said. Benny did not laugh. She saw nothing funny in it at all. And yet there must have been something funny about it, she argued, else her mother would not have laughed. She belonged

to the age when children knew they should be seen and not heard, especially when their elders were reading aloud, so she did not ask to have the thing explained: she just repeated it over several times to be sure of remembering it, and then told herself that some day she would be grown-up, and then she would know why it was funny and the grown-ups had laughed.

But quite apart from stories, apart even from make-believe and imagination, she used to have strange visions of fairy beings which were to her a complete reality and whose existence she never doubted. As she lay in bed, in the dark, out of a certain corner of the room, near the ceiling, would issue forth a procession of tiny people. They were dressed in little coloured hose and jerkins and caps. Some rode on tiny beasts, others ran and jumped and danced. Across the room they would float, while she watched in delight, and as they passed her some would turn and wave their hands and smile at her. So near they seemed that she could almost have touched them. Night after night she saw her Little People, and she grew to know them so well by sight that she would look out for this and that one in the procession. She never doubted that

they were real, and took the keenest delight in seeing them every night. She often spoke of them with her little sister, and one day she was overheard by her elder sister. "What nonsense!" this one remarked. "Fairies! There are no such things. You shouldn't tell stories. You're just making it all up."

Benny protested hotly that she *did* see the Little People and they *were* real. So Annie gave her a little tin box.

"If they are real," she said, "catch a little man in this. Don't open the box till the morning. Then open it and show him to me."

Benny felt a little doubtful as to whether the little man would like to be caught. However, Annie pressed her, and thinking he could be replaced in the procession the following night, she accepted the challenge. That night the Little People appeared as usual in the corner of the room. She had fixed on a certain little man she meant to catch, and as the procession came towards her, she stood up eagerly in her cot, the open box in her hands. Quickly she slipped it over the little man, and put the lid on before he could jump out. The procession moved on without him, and she lay

down in her bed again, her heart beating with excitement.

When she woke up the sun was streaming into her room, and the first thing she thought of was the tin box. Yes, there it was on the table by her bed, the lid firmly closed. To think of it—there was a little fairy man inside! She was almost too excited to eat her breakfast. No sooner was it over than she called her two sisters out to the garden.

"I've got him!" she said, clasping the box to her. Maudie was all joyful faith, Annie was sceptical but interested.

The three small girls made their way to a remote corner of the garden that seemed suitable for a fairy to be let out in. "*Now*," said Annie. Benny opened the box. . . . *Alas*, it was empty!

Another mysterious person she used to see was a little old man who sometimes sat beneath a table at the bottom of the stairs. Once she called her father and mother out of the drawing-room to see him; but he vanished, and she was so severely reproved for romancing that she never again spoke of such things.

Benny simply did not know what physical fear was. At four years old she once took

advantage of the nurses' attention being distracted for a moment to kick her little heels into the fat sides of "Elfie," the pony, and shouting "Gee-up!" set off at a canter, leaving the nurses behind in distraught anxiety. At the end of the village street she pulled "Elfie" in, turned him and trotted back, with the big smile that was so characteristic. But a weird kind of imaginative fear she did know. For months she insisted on being allowed to go into church by a side door so as to avoid passing "the 'ick man"—a recumbent marble effigy on a tomb—which filled her with terror. And once, in church, her attention was caught by her father's solemn, sonorous voice reading the text, "Behold, sin lieth at the door." Instantly a grim picture rose in her baby mind of a thin, grey, shapeless person, lying at the threshold of the door. She said nothing, but so great was her horror that for a long time she would hang back, refusing to go out of a door, until someone else had passed out first. When questioned by her mother, she confided to her "Papa *said*, 'Sin lieth at the door.'"

Satan, too, was a very real person to her; but her warm little heart went out in pity to "poor Satan." It seemed to her logical mind

Babyhood and Early Childhood.

that since it was Satan who made people wicked, it was most desirable that Satan should be reformed without delay. And so, at the end of her prayers she added the clause, "And please make Satan good, and bless nurse." Nurse strongly objected to this—whether on theological or personal grounds does not appear. But if "Miss Florrie" had made up her mind to do a thing, it was quite beyond the powers of nurse to prevent it, and so Satan and the scarecrow continued to be duly prayed for every night.

And Benny had a very great faith in prayer being efficacious, as is demonstrated by the story of the resurrection of Jack Martin.

Jack Martin was a lady-bird. He was one of a beloved family of lady-birds that Benny kept in a box and loved dearly. They used to go to church with her. In those days the big square pews were still in existence, and the Rectory household having been duly shut in, the smaller members of it were so completely out of sight of the congregation as to enjoy great freedom. It was here that Jack Martin and his family were so supremely entertaining; for they would run races along the seats and do mountain-climbing on hymn-books

and hassocks, whiling away many a tedious hour. But, alas! the sad day came when Jack Martin departed this life. He drew in all his dear little black legs tight beneath his scarlet wing-cases and would not stir, even though called by every endearing name and watered with hot, salt tears. Moreover, Annie, the naturalist of the family, declared him to be dead, and Annie *knew*. So a coffin was manufactured from a match-box; a grave was dug; Benny bore the coffin, Maudie was chief mourner, and the last rites were sadly performed for poor Jack Martin.

Two days passed. And then, at family prayers, Mr. Charlesworth read out the story of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Benny's attention had been caught by the story being about a death—her own bereavement was so recent that she felt somewhat affected. And as she listened, she heard the marvellous fact that Lazarus, who had been in the grave four days already, came to life! Jack Martin had only been in the grave two days. God was still as kind and powerful. With all her heart she prayed Him to restore Jack Martin to life.

After prayers she announced to her sisters

the joyful idea. Maudie, as usual, was full of admiration and faith, but Annie was incredulous. Anything as dead as Jack Martin was, two days ago, couldn't possibly come to life. But Benny held that it didn't matter how dead he was—God could cause his resurrection. So, with due ceremony, Jack Martin was exhumed, and the coffin opened. And lo, Jack Martin ran out! Benny was jubilant, and her faith was greatly strengthened, for she never doubted that it was her prayer and the goodness of God that had brought back Jack Martin from the valley of the shadow of death to the sunny world, her love and the bosom of his family.

Of course Benny wrote stories at this time, but, alas! the precious MSS. did not survive a certain great clearance of "rubbish" that took place after her mother's death, and in her own absence. The world is no doubt the poorer. That those MSS. were full of *style* we may be sure, for Benny had the greatest *aplomb* and *savoire faire*.

A complete lack of self-consciousness, a naïve confidence in her own powers, a generous affection for all the world, removed far from her the least symptom of shyness. The village

folk loved her, and no doubt her presence was a great acquisition to the parish parties and assemblies. It was at one of these—though what the occasion exactly was I cannot say—that it was decreed that Benny should make a speech. Of course no one thought of telling her what to say—Benny probably had far more to say than anyone else. She prepared her speech carefully, moulding her style on that of some local orator she had once heard. When the time came and she was made to stand on a chair, she cleared her throat, looked around with her merry brown eyes to secure attention, and then commenced (like her orator): "Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking . . ." The room roared. For once Benny was a little disconcerted. She had said nothing funny—yet.

But writing and public speaking were not her real outlet. She was heart and soul a musician. At four years old she already possessed a big and beautiful contralto voice! Singing she adored. By singing she could let out all the big things pent up in her idealist's soul, in her small, brave heart. In church she loved to sit in the wooden gallery where her mother sometimes played the harmonium,

for here she was raised above the people, was away from the hushing nursemaids; here (while her mother was preoccupied with the complexities of the harmonium) she could pour forth her soul to her Creator! It was the chants she loved best, for here she was unhampered by any knowledge of the words, and could raise her voice and sing of all she saw—the blue sky and the trees outside the window, the birds, the sunlight, and all the funny people in church. Of a great many of the hymns she knew the words by heart, and before she was four years old she was leading the singing at her mother's "cottage meetings" on Sunday afternoons, seated on the table facing the simple villagers, to whom it was a matter of course that "Miss Florrie" should start every hymn.

It is a well-known fact among singers that to a born contralto, singing in a high key during childhood is a real effort and seems unnatural. Benny (who had what was later to prove a really wonderful voice and the soul of a musical genius) sang always in the rich, low key that seemed so satisfying and said so much. And when other people started hymns in a key uncomfortably high for her, she would sing the whole hymn through an octave lower. This

troubled her mother, as did also the fact that Benny pitched her voice so low in speaking; and she came to the conclusion that it was a pose, adopted as being more like a boy—for Benny wished ardently that she had been born a boy. With a view, therefore, to showing her how little boys *did* sing, she took her to hear evensong in Worcester Cathedral (her father being in charge of a church in Worcester for a few months).

Never before had small Benny been in so vast and solemn a place. It impressed her deeply. She stood by her mother and drank it all in—the dim, misty heights of the roof, the pillars, the stained-glass windows, the holy stillness and the sense of worship in the very walls. And then the organ began, and for the first time in her life she heard music, *music*, MUSIC! Her heart beat fast—here was what she had always known there must be. Her mother little guessed what was happening in the small figure at her side. The organ swelled and rose into the vaulted roof, and Benny's little heart swelled too, and beat faster than ever; and the organ died away in a soft sob, and Benny, too, felt very like crying, though she didn't know why, for she was very happy.

Four Years Old.

LIMPSFIELD CHURCH.

And then the angel-like procession of little white-clad boys filed out of a distant corner and vanished into the choir, and presently they began to sing.

Clear, flute-like, the solo pierced up into the very roof and seemed to be reaching up to join the angels' voices. . . . But Benny was sad —for she knew she could never sing like *that*. She went home very quiet; and henceforth she tried to develop her high notes.

(It was more than forty years after that she again stood in Worcester Cathedral, and again the Gothic beauty, the *worship* that those faithful hearts of old put into their very stones, stirred her soul. She had come and stood on the very spot where so long ago she had stood and drunk in this big thing for the first time. Presently she looked about her. "But there used to be wooden benches here," she said. The verger shook his head. "No, Madam," he said, "this has always been a clear space." A very ancient verger happened to be making his way slowly past at the moment, and hearing the question, he stopped. "Aye, aye," he said, "there *did* used to be wooden benches on this here spot—but that were mor'n forty year ago." The young verger looked puzzled:

for my mother always looked far less than her age, and most people do not remember exactly where wooden benches used to be when they were six years old. I mention this incident as typical of her accurate and vivid memory.)

And now I come to two memories of her childhood that not only lasted all her life, but affected her very deeply. She looked upon them as very real landmarks in her spiritual life: graces of God for which she could never be sufficiently thankful.

The first of these incidents occurred when she was just four. It was a dream. In it she found herself alone in Sandy Lane—a steep lane not far from Limpsfield, along the Titsey Road. Suddenly she found "Satan was coming after her." She was indescribably terrified, and did not know how to escape him. Then, looking up Sandy Lane, she saw Christ standing at the top. She called out to Him to save her from Satan; and in a moment He was at her side. She slipped her hand into His, and felt it close on hers. Satan had gone, and together He and she walked up Sandy Lane, and she felt no more frightened at all, but very, very happy.

When she awoke it was all very real to her,

and this dream-vision of Christ seemed to have made Him as it were her own special friend and protector. Ever after, and when she was quite grown up, that walk up Sandy Lane was a vivid memory, and seemed symbolical of *life*. She said herself that this dream, almost of her babyhood, helped her, later, to realise the continual presence of Christ with those who need Him; the simplicity of His friendship; the wholly comforting sense of His protection; the wonder of His condescending love that will go hand in hand with the little children we are and never let go all up the "Sandy Lane" of life. This sense of the presence of Christ with her was one of her most marked characteristics to those who knew her well. In her work she depended on it—especially in her public speaking on religion; in her life she seemed never to forget it. And, as was to be expected, it had its effect upon her own personality. Thus wrote one of her friends, after her death: "I have never known anyone so truly *Christlike*—so loving and courageous, so full of idealism and utter unselfishness, and yet so enthusiastic and full of the joy of life."

The other incident is even more striking.

It occurred on the Good Friday after her fourth birthday.

The family were in church, shut safely into their square pew as usual. No doubt Benny had been playing with hymn-books and hassocks as was her wont. But when it came to the reading of the Gospel for the day her mother stood her up on the seat. The passage is, of course, the account of the Passion, according to St. John. Mr. Charlesworth had a very beautiful and impressive manner of reading. This, combined with the complete simplicity of the evangelist's style, captured Benny's attention. She began to listen. Soon she was deeply absorbed in the story, her big eyes fixed anxiously on her father's grave, handsome face, as his deep voice rose and fell, and the tremendous tragedy of the Cross was gradually unfolded. Wondering, she heard how Judas betrayed, how Peter denied, how the high priest questioned, and the servant struck his blow. Breathlessly she listened to the long interview with Pilate: so often it seemed as if Pilate was about to save the innocent Christ, and her heart rose; and then, no—Pilate was such a coward, so afraid of the Jews. Still, something would happen, something *must* surely

happen! Benny's lips were parted, her breath came quick, her eyes were fixed unflinchingly on her father's calm face, as on and on he read. Quite oblivious was she of all the people listening so callously to the well-known account. To her it was the story, heard for the first time, of how God stood arraigned before men; of how Jesus, the tender, loving friend of children, was wholly in the power of evil men. The story proceeded. How dared they mock Him! How *could* they shout that He should be crucified! Still, Pilate was trying to save Him —oh, surely he *would*. And then, suddenly, came those terrible, those simple, those tremendous words: "Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified: and they took Jesus, and led him away. And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha: where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst."

It was too much for Benny. Sinking down on the seat of the old square pew, she burst into a paroxysm of weeping. "*Why* did they—*why* did they?" she sobbed. "Oh, mother, *why did they?*"

Nothing would console her, and her mother was obliged to take her out of church, and lead her home. She took her quietly to her room, and holding the little form, still shaken with sobs, in her arms, she tried to explain very simply how the Lord Jesus, being God, *could* have saved Himself; and how, instead, He willingly gave Himself up to that terrible death, because it was the way God had arranged to save sinful men and open the gate of heaven to all who should believe in and love and obey His Son.

"It was for *you*, too, little one," said her mother, "to give *you* the chance of seeing Him at last in heaven."

The words, spoken so gently by the soft voice of the mother she loved, seemed to smite into her heart. "For *you*." She never forgot them; and from that time the necessity for gratitude, for service, was a very real thought.

But the happy days at Limpsfield were numbered. Benny was only seven when she had to say good-bye to the beloved house, to the lanes and fields and woods she loved; to the old garden, where every tree, every bush, every flower-bed, every little corner held a charm of its own, was almost part of her. To it all

Benny said good-bye, but it all remained fresh and living in her little heart and grew up with her, and she remained lovingly faithful to those memories until at last she came back . . . came "home" again.

II: FROM LIMPSFIELD TO LIMEHOUSE

IT was a wrench to leave the old home, of course; and Benny (or "Florrie" as she was now called) must have missed the Rectory garden, the woods and lanes and sunshine of Surrey; and yet, to an adventurous spirit like hers, there was something exhilarating in the thought of going into the very heart of London—great, rumbling London: for the sound of London in those days was still a deep, thunderous rumble, not yet changed to the buzz and whirr and hoot of motor traffic. My mother came to love the sound of "London's great voice," as she called it. She loved the personality of London as only a Londoner can. In later years she loved to get back into London, if only for a day. She loved humanity; and in London one gets very close to humanity—a kindly, cheery humanity more full of *bonhomie* than that of any other city in England, perhaps in all the world.

There was a touch of romance in the way the journey was performed which must have appealed to seven-year-old Florrie, for she and her father

drove all the way from Limpsfield to Limehouse in the little pony-chaise.

Out of the scenes of her childhood she passed, along mile after mile of country road, drinking in the wonder of the green world being so big, of the road going on and on so far; and then as the trees and hedges were replaced by houses and ever more houses, her vivid interest in people began to awaken. Presently the suburban streets had turned to thoroughfares. Here, the roar and bustle of traffic, the beat of a thousand hoofs, the rumble of wheels, the cries of paper boys, the hundred fascinating sights on every side—all spoke to her with a new voice, and her little heart went out to it all.

Thus it was that Florrie arrived in London and began a new chapter of her life.

It was to a typical East London parish that Mr. Charlesworth had brought his family. The Rectory was one of those big old houses belonging to better days, older than the factories that had grown up around it and the wretched tenements and squalid streets.

In front of the house was a large gravelled courtyard, its high wall and gate giving it almost the privacy of a country garden. This became Florrie's playground. Bare and prison-

like it might have seemed to some people, but Florrie counted not at all on the visible world for her entertainment—her imagination easily supplied all that was necessary. Round and round the gravel courtyard would ride—not Florrie on her pony, but crusaders on their steeds of war, errant knights, explorers, kings. Many a brave fight was fought, many a perilous journey accomplished as "Elfie's" little hoofs beat in a monotonous jog-trot around that walled courtyard.

At the back of the house there was something that was thrilling in itself. The garden went down to a canal, and along this canal passed barges, and on the barges could be seen bargees and their interesting, dirty, merry families. The East India Docks, too, were quite near by, and, wonder of wonders, bright-coloured parrots, captured and brought back by the sailors, would sometimes escape and appear in the Rectory garden. This was really romantic and seemed to link up the quiet, grey days of Limehouse with the glowing land across the blue, blue seas.

Sometimes there were thrilling expeditions across London. These always meant a long, jolty ride in an exceedingly stuffy old horse-'bus,

with straw on the floor. Unpleasant as most people would have thought those journeys, they were full of romance to Florrie and her little sister; for of course the 'bus became the tumbril, driving victims of the Revolution to the guillotine. More often, however, it was the Black Maria, and each fresh passenger that got in became the subject of an excited conversation in stage-whispers between Florrie and Maudie, as to exactly what crime the person had committed.

Sometimes the object of those 'bus rides was a visit to the Polytechnic Exhibition—the children's one treat. Those visits were an intense delight to Florrie, and here it was that her dramatic instinct was awakened. For here could be seen *plays*.

Apparently the actors were not sufficiently intelligent to learn their parts, for all they could do was to strike attitudes and mouth the words, while a gentleman with a shaded lamp read the dialogue from a corner of the stage. But it sufficed to stimulate Florrie to a new form of self-expression. She became at once playwright, stage-manager, and most of the cast, with Maudie as the rest of it, and a row of empty chairs by way of audience. Hour after hour was passed in

dramatic performances of most intense action and feeling. No need, here, of a gentleman with a shaded lamp, for the actors spoke in language the more eloquent in that it flowed spontaneously from the heart.

Florence was sometimes naughty—probably short-lived outbursts of the hot temper that could not but go with so ardent a temperament, for anything more deliberate would have been quite alien to her loving, sunny nature. One day a punishment took the form of somewhat prolonged solitary confinement. No doubt the room became the Château de Chillon and other noted prisons, but at last the punishment grew a little tedious, and she looked around for something to *do*. Her eyes fell on a small, sharp pair of scissors. Whether it was pure mischief or some idea of disguise I do not know, but, standing before a mirror, the small prisoner completely cut off all her long dark lashes and the fine black eyebrows that were so characteristic a feature! Her mother's dismay can well be imagined.

It was now that her power over animals began to display itself. Her first pets were a pair of dormice. These she trained to do many quaint little tricks. She would bring them to meals and put them on the table by her. During

grace the dormice always sat up on their haunches and folded their little hands, not dreaming of falling-to on their crumbs of bread until this performance was over. She made a little pulpit, and would array one of the dormice in a tiny surplice. He would then mount the steps and stand with his forepaws on the edge, as if preaching a sermon. The other one she taught to hold a tiny doll's comb and comb its hair! Later, her influence over animals was very wonderful.

Music meant more than ever to Florrie; and now, besides singing and piano-playing, she found a new outlet. At a Christmas party she had been presented with a toy violin. All her musician's soul went out towards the shiny little brown instrument, not as to a thing to play with but as a means of making music, of *speaking*. Shutting herself up alone, she set to work with the rasping little bow on the wretched strings, and had soon tuned them up and discovered the method of playing the scale. After that there was no difficulty in playing any tunes. But Florrie herself had doubts as to the result being *music!* She longed for a *real* violin—for something that would really speak beneath her deft little fingers and the steady sweep of her bow. It must have been an inspiration of her good

angel, for, all unexpectedly, her aunt, hearing how cleverly she could play tunes on a toy fiddle, sent her a pound wherewith to buy a real one. Now, at last, she could make music! But her new joy was soon to be marred.

Thinking that it would be a tremendous treat for her, some one took her to hear a professional violinist. Breathlessly she watched as he walked on to the stage with his fiddle. She was all eyes and ears, for she had never yet heard anyone play the violin. He raised it to his shoulder, drew the bow across it, tuned up, and began. But Florrie hardly heard, her heart was so full of confusion. . . . All this time she had been playing the violin the wrong way round! *Musicians* rested their violins on their shoulders—*she* had rested it on her knee, 'cello-fashion.

She went home and tried to play as the musician had done, but all the fingering she had so carefully acquired and learnt to do with such dexterity was reversed—she could not play. Nothing daunted, she again retired to some private corner of the house and unlearnt all she had learnt, and taught herself afresh.

Florrie was ten years old by this time and her beautiful voice and wonderful ear were becoming of real service to her mother, who took her about

to her numerous meetings either as accompanist on the piano, or to lead the singing if no instrument were provided. Few women did public speaking in those days, and Mrs. Charlesworth was very much in demand for evangelical meetings of various sorts. It was the day, too, of "revivals," where hymn-singing was made a prominent feature. The "revivalists" would bring with them striking new hymns to tunes that were not to be found in the old hymn-books. Florrie would be taken to these great meetings that she might hear the new tunes; for once heard she could play them perfectly by ear, with correct harmonies, and they could then be taught to Mrs. Charlesworth's audiences.

Florrie also went with her mother to visit the poor, and would climb long flights of stairs to miserable garrets (when the squalor and filth filled her with pity and not a little with dismay) that she might sing to the sick and bring some brightness into their unhappy lives. A loving generosity had been a marked feature of her character from earliest days, and so this service of love pleased her no less than it pleased the poor.

But the real test of her musical powers was to come when she was nearly twelve. The

church was to undergo cleaning and repairs, and it was arranged that the services should take place in the town-hall. There was no instrument, but the choir undertook to lead the hymns and chants unaccompanied. The choir, however, made a dismal fiasco of the whole thing, and the first Sunday's services were not very successful. Mr. Charlesworth was a man of few words. He said nothing to the choir except that its services would not be required on the following Sunday. Then, calling his small daughter to his study, "My child," he said, "I wish you to lead the singing in the town-hall next Sunday."

"All right, papa," said Florrie, quite undaunted, and the next Sunday she was placed on a chair near her father, in the centre of the platform. When the moment for the first chant arrived Florrie stood up and commenced, in her big, full voice. Led thus with complete certainty the people took it up at once. So with each chant and hymn. That Sunday's services were a great success, and Florrie continued to lead the singing until the services in church could be resumed.

A strange, quiet friendship existed between the very silent, reserved man and the very live small girl. At times he could be full of fun,

but fits of intense depression would make him isolate himself from his family for days together. With her quick sympathy Florrie understood him and knew how to be just what he wanted. Night after night they would sit silently, one each side of a chess-board, with no word spoken but an occasional quiet "check"—and it was often Florrie who spoke it, though Mr. Charlesworth was a good player. Sometimes the game would not be finished by the time she was called off to bed. The little table would then be carefully carried and placed in another room, and it was a point of honour that neither should enter this room or look at the board, so that no unfair advantage in thinking out the next moves might be taken. To Florrie this war of the kings and queens and knights and bishops was a serious matter, and often her grasp of the situation and rapid calculation would show her keen young mind to be a good match for her father's powers.

Sometimes Mr. Charlesworth would come out of his usual seclusion, and calling his three small daughters together spend an evening with them, discussing books or sometimes Biblical questions. He was a man of deep thought and intelligence. Florrie, eager as usual, would fetch a little chair and place it as close to her father as possible, and,

entering absorbedly into the subject on hand, ask question after question, much (we may imagine) as the little Christ plied the doctors in the Temple with questions.

Three ideas in particular Mr. Charlesworth left so deeply impressed on his daughter that she never forgot them. One was a most profound reverence for the Bible, as being the inspired word of God. Apart from the *mind's* veneration, he insisted on outward reverence being paid to the book. He would allow no other book—not even a prayer-book—to be placed upon a copy of the Bible. This lesson of outward reverence had a vital effect, for it brought home to the child's mind the reality and the meaning of the *inspiration* of the Scriptures. Her faith in this became the dominant idea in her mind, and greatly affected her life and future activities.

Another principle her father taught her was an uncompromising regard for *truth*. He considered no kind of untruthful speaking *ever* justifiable. To Florrie's truth-loving soul this maxim easily commended itself, and the emphasis her father laid on the idea made her adopt it as a life-principle and she never forgot it. In later years she hated exaggeration and the embellishing of a true story by fictitious details;

not only on account of the value of truth in itself, but on artistic grounds. Untrue details added afterwards almost always spoil the artistic effect of a true story, she would often say ; and she loved to distinguish between the good *raconteur* who has noted every effective detail and grasped the dramatic essentials of the situation and the mere lying fabricator of " a good story." Many people with dull minds, no imagination and no literary sense, do not realise this distinction, and class all story-tellers together as untruthful people. These dull-minded people were always a great trial to her. But her love of true stories truthfully told did not mean that she undervalued the power of creative imagination. This was, to her, another department of the art of story-telling. She had an instinctive sense that they must be kept apart. Thus, in her novels she never portrayed actual people that she had met—always her characters were pure fictions of her ingenious brain. People never believed this, and she used to get many letters asking for the real name and the address of her " Dr. Brand " of " The Rosary."

The third lesson she learnt from her father was that of always, on principle, being *perfectly courteous* to everyone, of whatever social standing.

In outward matters there was perhaps nothing more characteristic of my mother to the end of her life. She treated servants, porters, cabbies, beggars with true courtesy, and her fellow passengers in a 'bus as she would have treated people in her own drawing-room. It had the effect of making all the world seem her friends. It was, of course, largely her love of mankind and her practical Christianity; but it was also, largely, the principle of courtesy she had learned from her father. After all, courtesy is only one of the forms of *justice*—and she was always supremely *just*. No one has a right to be discourteous to a fellow-being, especially if he is bravely filling some lowly place in the scheme of things. This was her social philosophy, so to speak; and of course it is simply the philosophy of Christ. If people were only *just*, there would be no snobbery and less class-bitterness. But few Christians translate their ideals into such *literal* effect as did my mother, and I suppose few people could number among their personal friends people so divergent in social standing and occupation.

"How nice to be written about by someone who *knows* us, at *last*," remarked a certain dowager duchess to another, as she finished

"The Rosary"; and the working people loved her books because whenever they appeared in them it was always as real, simple, likeable characters, never burlesqued, never ridiculed. There is a literary courtesy as much as there is any other, and my mother practised it deliberately.

But to return to Florrie. She had not, at nine years old, quite such nicety of perception with regard to other people's views as she came to acquire later on, and she direly shocked her rather sedate aunt, when she went to stay with her at Clapham.

Her aunt was mildly distressed at finding that small, bright-eyed Florence liked to sit in the drawing-room, with jauntily crossed legs and folded arms, talking confidently of things in general, instead of sitting demurely, plying a needle, as young ladies used to do when she was young. With a view to remedying this deficiency, she gave her small niece one-and-sixpence and sent her out, accompanied by a maid, to buy a piece of fancy-work and some coloured worsted, that she might employ her time profitably and at the same time prepare a small birthday gift for her mother. The piece of work was to have a pattern traced upon it of simple design.

Florrie was highly delighted at the idea and the generosity of her aunt, and pranced gaily off towards the shops.

Arrived at the counter she ran her eyes quickly over the stock of articles and soon fixed on a kettle-holder, with her usual assurance and decision. It represented the devil on a velocipede, and the legend traced below was "How's your poor feet?" (a vulgar catchword of the day). Having chosen suitable worsteds for working this enchanting device effectively, Florrie marched triumphantly home, the very diffident and rather uneasy maid in her wake. But, alas! her aunt was deeply shocked and horrified, and Florrie's treasured purchase was sent back immediately by the maid, to be exchanged for some quiet device of flowers, and wools of pale and uninspiring hues.

One thing that deeply impressed Florrie in her first years in London was the number of terrible fogs—both the black kind and the "pea-soup" ones. The "pea-soup" fogs were bearable—in fact they were rather fun; but the black ones reduced everybody to a helpless condition. Half choked, with smarting eyes and continual cough, there was nothing for it but to lie down and wait for the fog to lift. And horrible were

the tales of pedestrians robbed in the darkness as they groped their way home. A story that particularly pleased her was that of a blind man who lived in the neighbourhood and made his fortune, in these black fogs, by guiding people home: for his darkness was already so complete that the fog made no difference to him.

The "pea-soup" fogs were chiefly fun because they impeded the daily governess. One day, there being a decided fog, with hopeful signs of its growing decidedly worse, and the governess not having arrived at the usual hour, Florrie announced that they were safe for the day, and delightedly swept all the lesson-books off the table, turned it upside down on the schoolroom floor, and had just rigged up a sail with the table-cloth, with a view to sailing to Egypt or somewhere, when, on the threshold of the door, appeared Miss Smith, shocked, indignant. It was so very difficult to explain why, just to-day, the schoolroom table should be that way up. In future mere "pea-soup" fogs were not trusted as a *sure* preventative of the daily governess.

But in spite of these little irregularities Florrie was growing up, and was already (at twelve years old) mature beyond her years. Her mother

leaned on her in everything, consulting her in household and parish perplexities, entrusting to her tasks many older girls could not have carried off. Perhaps Mrs. Charlesworth would be going out to some important meeting; suddenly she would hear that someone of importance was coming to see the Rector; while some household concern even further complicated matters. Harassed, uncertain what to do, easily upset because not strong in health, she would call at once for Florrie and pour out the difficulties.

"*All* right, mother," came Florrie's deep, clear voice, and she would take the situation in hand and deal with it in a complete and competent manner.

"When Florrie says 'All right' like that, I *know* all will be well, and I feel free to go out and leave it in her hands," her mother said more than once to a friend, who tells me it is quite impossible to realise to what an extent Mrs. Charlesworth leant on her daughter, and how splendidly Florrie always rose to the occasion. Her elder sister was very delicate and much away from home; her younger sister turned to her in everything; Florrie was the comfort and mainstay of the home from this time until she married: her remarkable personality being its

very life and sunshine. She was passionately devoted to her mother, and, though she lost her when she was nineteen, her love remained fresh, loyal, almost pathetically tender to the end.

But to return to Florrie's younger days. It was at this time (when she was nine years old, in fact) that she and my father first met.

Miss Maria Charlesworth, my mother's aunt, the author of that mid-Victorian classic, "Ministering Children," lived in a charming little house in the old-fashioned Surrey village, Nutfield. Miss Charlesworth would very often lend "The Cottage" to the Limehouse family, who would come back joyfully to the green beauty and sunshine of their beloved Surrey.

"The Cottage" belonged to Arthur Barclay, an elder brother of my father's, who lived at Nutfield Court, a pretty grey stone house with a lovely garden full of grassy slopes, velvety lawns, and winding paths. A little old grey church, surrounded by a large shady churchyard, stood between Nutfield Court and "The Cottage," and a path running through the churchyard led from one to the other.

At Nutfield Court lived three small boys. To play with these boys was a great delight to Florrie and her sisters. Consequently they would spend

much of their time in my uncle's garden, while the energetic cricket that Florrie enjoyed so much wore most of the grass off Miss Charlesworth's little lawn!

Florrie occasionally stayed at "The Cottage" with Miss Charlesworth, and used to prove very helpful at the parties her aunt held for the villagers, her charming, friendly manners winning all hearts.

My father (then about to go up to Cambridge) and his sister Neville often stayed at Nutfield. One of their visits chanced to coincide with that of the Charlesworth family to "The Cottage," and so it was my father made the acquaintance of this bright-eyed, jolly small girl, with her ready smile and unbounded enthusiasm for everything and everybody. They made good friends at once, to Florrie's great satisfaction.

A close friendship sprang up between Florrie and my father's sister, Neville, which continued for many years.

It was at this time that she first visited my father's home—Bury Hill, one of the most beautiful places in Surrey. He and his sister took her over from Nutfield for the day. After that she was a constant visitor there, and it became almost a second home to her. She

learnt to row on the lake, and altogether used to have a very jolly time, for she was a general favourite, and my father's elder brothers would take her about with them, too.

She always took her precious fiddle to Bury Hill, and would play and sing to the assembled company, quite devoid of self-conscious shyness.

It was when she was eleven years old, staying in Wales convalescing after a severe attack of scarlet fever, that my father (who was spending the day with them) made up his mind that some day this wonderful small girl should be his wife!

Her visits to Bury Hill continued all through the years during which she was gradually growing up. Her mother was glad to send her out of the poisonous air of Limehouse. The place appealed strongly to her beauty-loving soul—the still waters of the lake, the blaze of colour when the rhododendrons and azaleas were in flower, the great stretches of grassy park full of trees.

Still, Limehouse was *home*, and she loved it better than anywhere else, however beautiful.

As she grew up her mother would take her about more and more. She would even take her into the factories, where it was very difficult

for a Church worker to get a hearing. The factory girls would shout down any visitor who tried to speak to them, and even throw rubbish at them till they were forced to retire. But when Florrie accompanied her mother, carrying her violin, and smiling at the girls in her quite irresistible way, they would keep quiet to give "the little 'un" a chance. Then she would play her violin and sing them hymns, or sometimes songs like "Annie Laurie," and after that they would keep quiet and even gather round to hear an address from Mrs. Charlesworth.

This factory work appealed to Florrie, and at the age of sixteen she visited them, simply accompanied by the parish Bible-woman, to play and sing to the girls and make friends with them. It took a good deal of pluck, for the factory hands were rough customers.

One day she had climbed a ladder up into the topmost room of a sack factory. It had been almost impossible to gain a hearing. As she went down the ladder again one of the girls dropped a large sack through the trap door and completely enveloped her. She found herself in a difficult and dangerous position, but quite fearlessly continued to descend the ladder. Arrived at the bottom, she got out of the sack, rolled it up

in a bundle, climbed the ladder again, and, with her merry laugh, threw it back to the girl who had dropped it over her: after that she was a welcome visitor in that topmost storey.

Meanwhile she and my father had become still closer friends, and kept up a correspondence for some years. He had travelled round the world since the Nutfield days, and been ordained, taking up work at Limehouse as curate to Mr. Charlesworth. It was, her parents admitted, on his account that at the age of seventeen Florrie was sent to Belstead, the school her mother had herself attended.

She had received a good education under an able governess. Her very frequent visits to Nutfield and Bury Hill had not harmed her education, for her quick mind, powers of concentration and wonderful memory made learning an easy matter. Belstead could not teach her much, but she was very happy at the school, and my father, nothing daunted, persevered in writing to her!

At last, soon after her eighteenth birthday, he went down to Nutfield, where she was staying with her family, and they became formally engaged.

On March 10, 1881, they were married in St. Anne's Church, Limehouse, a crowd of 2,500

affectionate parishioners gathering in and outside the church.

He had long promised that their honeymoon should consist of a tour in Palestine. He knew the country well, and for years she had longed to visit the Holy Land. In spite of the sage advice of many relatives they made their plans, and, full of joy, set out on what proved to be a very happy and very wonderful four months.

III: A TOUR IN PALESTINE

I SUPPOSE there are few people who set out on their honeymoon in quite the spirit which animated this eighteen-year-old bride, as she said goodbye to grimy old Limehouse and turned her face towards the rising sun. Her attitude was a characteristic one, namely, a spirit of pilgrimage almost passionately intent, yet tinged with high romance by a natural eagerness for adventure ; and running through all the spirit of childlike delight in everything that would be such "fun" in this long, strange journey.

Her spirit of pilgrimage was a very living, real thing ; it was what one might call the spirit of historical realism in religion. She wanted intensely to go to Palestine because it was in Palestine that God became man. She wanted to walk the roads that He had walked, to climb the same mountains and pray on them, too ; to feel her eyes were resting upon the same scene of blue waters and hills and nestling white villages that the eyes of Christ beheld. She wanted Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth,

Jericho to become real places to her, instead of mere names and dream-cities of the imagination. To her they were the scenes of the greatest drama in history. She had always loved them, and from her babyhood's days had lived in them in loving fancy. At last she was to *see* them, and the sense of worship in her responded with a deep joy and wondering awe.

But before reaching the sacred spots there was a journey to be made that would be in itself an adventure.

Every detail she enjoyed and grasped with that vivid, dramatic sense that was her natural attitude of mind. Catching at once the salient points of every episode, the touches of humour or pathos or beauty, she wove the whole into a picture or a story, and wrote it home to her mother or stored it up in her wonderful memory, so that we, her children, seem almost to have made that journey with her, so clearly have we seen and heard all that she saw and heard.

The French railway journey and her quaint fellow travellers were a cause of much amusement, and the week-end spent in Paris an interest. She records in her diary, with naïve honesty of opinion, that "The pictures at the Louvre are very wonderful: many most strange

NINE YEARS OLD.

(Taken by C.W.B.)

At the Age of 14

effects of light. But upon the whole they are rather a set of horrors, most of them!"

A ride in a "very hot and stuffy" omnibus at Lyons proved entertaining on account of its occupants; but she was deeply shocked at the way wives treated their husbands; and after describing several episodes and conversations in her diary, she moralises a little upon the subject. I cannot resist quoting this, because though her dictum was made after a brief three days of married life, she lived up to it through forty years with a complete fidelity rivalled by few women, I imagine.

"At last we drove off and went lumbering along through Lyons. Sitting next me was an Englishman, who had to take his wife on his knee, as there was no room any other way. We were much amused at them, for she was a most cross and unpleasant little woman, and sat and scolded him the whole way, before everyone. He was a regular good-natured sort of Englishman, and took it very patiently, at first trying to smooth things down and pacify her, and then listening with meek, silent resignation. I suggested to Charlie that I had better begin the same with him; however, if I did I would not be so mean as to do it sitting upon his knee and leaving him no possible

chance of escape! It does make me so indignant to hear women pecking at their husbands in that fashion. I think a wife ought to blame everyone in the world, herself included, before she dreams of blaming her husband."

"Marseilles," she says, "is a beautiful town. I am delighted with it. . . . We saw the old state prison, Château d'If, out a mile or so from the shore, standing on a rock. I was wild to see the place where 'Monte Christo' spent so many weary years. We rowed out in a small boat. We were three hours altogether, and it was a most choppy sea; but I did not feel the least ill, though we ate bread and butter and biscuits and cheese and oranges the whole time, more or less! . . . We saw 'Monte Christo's' cell, and also the place where they threw him over the rock supposing him to be the dead abbé. I have been telling Charlie the story."

Her next entry, made at Alexandria, records the voyage.

"When I woke, at about half-past six, the sun was streaming in through the port-hole. I sat up and looked out. It was *glorious!* Blue, blue, everywhere. For the first time I saw the Mediterranean in its true colour. I could not lie still, but kept jumping up to look out, every minute. At last Charlie woke, and soon came tumbling down out of his berth. Then

we had coffee, dressed, and went on deck. A glorious surprise awaited us. We were out of sight of land the night before, when we went below, and now expected to see nothing but blue, everywhere. But rising out of the water, within a few miles of us, was a grand chain of snow mountains, glittering in the sun—which gave a beautiful, rosy tint to their summits. We found that this was the Island of Corsica. . . . Soon after we steamed past Elba, and looked with deep interest at the small, rocky kingdom allotted to the man who had conquered nearly every kingdom in Europe. One could fancy him pacing up and down the shore, like a caged lion, and looking over the blue Mediterranean towards France. It was grand to think that after all he did escape, left little Elba behind him, and came back again to shake the world once more. Charlie and I do not agree about Napoleon."

In a long letter to her mother she gives many amusing little details of the voyage. "I am delighted with everything on board," she writes, "and expect to have the greatest fun." Among their fellow passengers on board were the famous M. Lesseps (engineer of the Suez Canal) and Captain Conder of the Palestine Exploration Fund, with both of whom my father and mother made acquaintance.

In her next letter (posted at Naples) she mentions more of the delights; for instance:

"There are half-a-dozen mules on board, on the lower deck. I stroke their noses whenever we pass them. There are also sheep, some rabbits, and a good many fowls. I am afraid they are to be killed during the voyage. . . . All our meals are most comfortable; we are quite at the top of the table. I sit next the Captain — a fine, good-natured-looking old Frenchman, who persists in calling me 'Mademoiselle.' Who he supposes Charlie is I don't know!"

But, alas! the joys of the voyage were short-lived. The sea became very rough, and for the remaining five days she was unable to eat anything at all or leave her berth. She was, in fact, very ill, and had to be carried on shore at Alexandria. After describing her "jolly looking" old doctor, and "the very nice stewardess who had quite made up her mind that I was going to die, and used to sigh over the thought of '*ce pauvre jeune monsieur*' going back *alone!*" she remarks, "I need say no more about the rest of our voyage. It is better to draw a veil over its miseries. I must, however, just note that the *only* thing I was able to take,

and the only thing which gave me any relief, was champagne. I shall always recommend it for sea-sickness in future."

Still she managed to take interest in the landing, in spite of her condition, and get a very good first impression of the East, which she records in her diary with words of delighted wonder.

She was carried up to her room in the Hotel Abbât.

"We have a delightful room," she writes, "with windows looking down upon all the scene of bustle below. I find endless amusement in watching the people passing to and fro." (In her letter to her mother from Marseilles she remarked, "I think seeing *people* is really far more interesting than seeing places.")

She wrote a long letter to her mother from Alexandria, her health and spirits evidently quite recovered. After a minute description of the weird animals of the place, she remarks:

"This afternoon we got out our cornet for the first time. Charlie practised for some time in all sorts of attitudes. He succeeds best lying on his back and blasting towards the ceiling! I played my fiddle, and found it in perfect tune, in spite of the three thousand

miles it has travelled since I played it last." In the middle of other news she remarks, in brackets: "(I must just tell you that Charlie is in the act of blowing the cornet and has just accomplished *wonders!* He has been sitting by me on the sofa for the last quarter of an hour, practising, and studying the book of instructions, and has just found out where to put his tongue; the result is *stupendous*, to say the least! I am *so* delighted. I shall be so proud if he really turns out musical. I am sure the cornet is his instrument. I think if he did it out of the window all the donkeys in Alexandria would begin to bray!)"

The next entry in her diary is made a fortnight later, on the Suez Canal.

"Cairo," she writes, "is indeed a glorious place, and I have rarely enjoyed myself anywhere as I did there."

The next four pages of her diary are entirely devoted to the description of a somewhat quaint party staying at Shepherd's Hotel.

One member of this party was a good lady, "not short-sighted really, but who occasionally put up an eyeglass, just for effect, when she remembered to do it. If I laughed much with Charlie, she would look reprovingly at me, as much as to say, 'What unbecoming levity;

and in a married lady, too. How shocking.' " But this good lady caused much delight to the romanticist's soul of her little fellow traveller, by getting engaged to " a tall gentleman with spectacles, who always sat next to her at table d'hôte."

Then follows a long and graphic account of climbing the Great Pyramid. As they drove along the road and neared the Pyramid they were joined by some Arabs, who ran along by the carriage.

" One was a tall, fine-looking man, to whom I at once took a fancy," she writes, " and whose name was Schehatie. . . . When we at length reached the Pyramid . . . we were surrounded by a crowd of Arabs, from which we chose out three good strong ones to help me. Directly they understood that I really wished to go up the Pyramid, Schehatie seized me by one hand, while another Arab took tight hold of the other, and off we started, with two more to push behind. . . . Up we went, step after step; the two Arabs holding my hands jumping up first, and then pulling me after, while those behind gave appropriate shoves just at the right moment. Most of the steps were about to my waist. I managed to get one foot up on the edge, then came a pull in front, and a push behind, and I was up. We went very quickly.

. . . Some of the steps were up to my chin, but before I had time to wonder how I should ever get up them, my four Arabs had jumped me bodily up, so that to my great surprise I suddenly found my feet where my head had been a moment before. . . . You only have to keep your wits about you, spring just as they pull, and it is quite easy. It was harder for me than for most people, because being short, and not having very long legs, I could not stretch up so high—but I was not once hurt the whole way. I kept hearing Charlie's voice behind, calling out to know if I was tired, and I had just breath to shout, 'All right.' . . . I tore my dress—a long bit off the bottom—which Schehatie promptly mended by tying it up in a bow. This time Charlie was in front, and looking up I could see his legs every now and then as he went springing up the steps. I am sure he could beat any Arab in a race up the Pyramid and down again! . . . Twice more we rested for about a minute, then came the 'final heat.' (At our last rest we were many feet higher than the cross on the top of St. Paul's.) It *was* a pull, that last! Schehatie put on a spirt at the last four steps, and nearly carried me up them. Then they gave a yell of triumph, and I became aware of two facts—first that at last I was really on the top of the Great Pyramid; secondly that before doing anything else I must drink a pail of water. I think Charlie felt the same, for we both sat

BURY HILL.

A Week before the Wedding.

down with one accord upon a rock and drank and drank and panted and puffed. . . . And then we stood up and looked.

"It *was* wonderful, that view from the top of the Great Pyramid—wonderful from its strange contrasts. On one side lay the fertile Delta, with its groves of waving palm trees, oranges and olives, growing in rich profusion on the banks of the river Nile, which flowed along looking like a broad band of silver as it sparkled in the sunlight. On the other, the desert—with its rolling waves of golden sand, stretching away, away as far as the eye could reach, not a tree, not a leaf in sight, nothing but bare barren desert everywhere. And yet it was grand; more than grand—it was *glorious!* It gave one such a free, bounding feeling, to be able to look straight away for miles and miles, and see no boundary, nothing to shut one in, no walls, no trees, no distant hills; only a boundless, endless, glorious stretch of sand. This was my first real view of the desert. I loved it at once, and shall love it for ever."

The diary ends here, but her impressions and the history of her adventures are recorded in letters to her mother and father and her little sister. There is a long letter from Cairo, describing with delight the town, the bazaars, the Eastern bargaining.

"The donkeys here are splendid fun. Not the least like our donkeys in England. They are very sleek and pretty, with long ears and beautifully shaped legs. They gallop at a tremendous pace, and keep it up wonderfully. Everyone goes about on donkeys here, but most people only go at a sort of jog-trot pace. We tear about in fine style. The donkeys enjoy it, and so do the donkey-boys. I often say to Charlie, 'If only our mothers could see us!' There is one street here, called the Muski, the principal street in Cairo, where all the traffic goes on, full of shops and crowded with people and donkeys. You should see us go charging down this street, shouting 'ûâ, ûâ, shemâlak! yemûnak!' at the tops of our voices, to clear the way. . . . We certainly *do* enjoy ourselves. The other day we rode through Cairo on camels—a most unusual thing to do. I like camel-riding immensely."

The insect life of Cairo was not quite as delightful as the donkeys, but even this afforded copy for a "quite private" letter to her "Little One" (as she always addressed her sister Maudie).

"We wage a fearful war against the fleas here. Yesterday morning, while we were getting up, we caught and drowned no less than *fourteen!* Charlie was very proud because he performed

a great feat. Three fleas were sitting on his foot together. He caught one in each hand, and only one escaped!"

The next letters were from Palestine, and now the adventure and the "fun" began to turn into the pilgrimage in good earnest. In those days the Holy Land was still in its quite primitive condition—no railways, no European hotels, no means of travel, save on horseback, no roads even. This pleased my mother very much, for it meant that the country was practically as it was in the days of Christ. I will let her give her first impressions in her own words:

"From our camp on the
hills above Jaffa,
"April 11, 1881.

"My own darling Mother,—On this our first day in Palestine I must write a line to you. We arrived here at five o'clock this morning, after a moderately good passage from Port Said, of twelve hours. Joseph, our dragoman, came to meet us on board. We rowed to shore in a small boat. While half a mile off we could smell the delicious fragrance of the orange trees, and see our tents pitched, up on the hill, with the Union Jack and red ensign flying Upon landing we found our horses waiting for us, ready saddled: two beautiful bays, such

a rich, dark colour, with black manes, and long, flowing black tails. We rode up at once to our camp, from which we have a lovely view, looking upon the sea on one side, and across the plain of Sharon, and over the hills of Judea on the other. Everything was ready for us in our tents, of which we have three."

Her next letter is to her father—twenty pages beautifully written in her bold hand, with scarcely an erasure.

"JERUSALEM,
"April 18, 1881.

"My own dearest Father,—My first letter from here must be to you, for you first taught me to love Jerusalem, and the whole place seems associated with you.

"I shall never forget my first sight of this holy city. We had camped the night before at Gibeon, high up among the mountains of Judea. It was about three hours' ride from there to Jerusalem, straight over the mountains. Going in that way the hills hide Jerusalem until one is close upon it, when it suddenly bursts upon you, and is far grander than the usual way up from Jaffa, along the road.

"The first sight of Jerusalem is almost more than one can bear. When we got close to it I was riding a little way behind Charles and Joseph, and thinking of our Sunday talks about it, and how we used to sing 'Jerusalem' and talk

about going there, and I longed for you. Soon after, we all galloped up a hill in front of us, and from the top looked down upon Jerusalem.

"I shall never forget that moment. The city lies all amongst the hills which surround it on every side. We looked down over the Mount of Olives. It was far more beautiful than I expected. I scarcely know how to describe the city itself, it looks so very different to every other place, with its white, flat-roofed houses, and countless domes—the great Mosque of Omar standing probably on the very site of the Temple, close by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the whole city surrounded by high walls. We looked across the valley of Jehoshaphat, towards Stephen's Gate, on the east side of Jerusalem. We took about half an hour riding down into the city.

"It was very sweet and solemn to be in this place on Good Friday and on Easter Sunday. I think I enjoyed Sunday most. . . .

"In the afternoon we walked to Bethany—*His* favourite walk it seems to have been, and it was wonderful to tread the same paths which had so often been trodden by His blessed feet: for there is no doubt that they are the same, being deeply worn into the hard limestone.

"We first went up the Mount of Olives. From the top we had a wonderful view of Jerusalem on one side; the Dead Sea, the valley of the Jordan, the mountains of Moab and Mount Nebo, on the other. We could

also just see Bethlehem, nestling away in the blue hills. Looking down upon Jerusalem it is so beautiful to remember that verse in the 125th Psalm, 'As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even for ever.'

"We descended the Mount of Olives on the other side, along a winding path to Bethany. We looked with great interest at the fig-trees, for it must have been somewhere along that path that our Lord came to the fig-tree and found nothing but leaves.

"Bethany is a most lovely little village; by far the prettiest I have yet seen in Palestine. We went down into a strange old cave cut out into the rock, which is shown as the one where Lazarus was raised. They also show the house of Martha and Mary, but I did not care to see that, as it is not at all likely to be the real one. It was interesting, however, to see an old well which undoubtedly was there in their time. We watched the women drawing water from it with their stone water-pots, and tried to fancy Martha coming to fetch water with which to prepare the supper for Jesus. We carry a little Bible with us, and read at each place what occurred there. You may think the intense interest this is.

"We returned by another path to Jerusalem; the most usual one, which is also the high road to Jericho. It, too, is worn into the hard rock. It was along here that our Lord came

when He made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. We could tell even the very spot where, beholding the city, He wept over it; for all along that way the Mount of Olives hides the city until you come to a sudden turn in the path—when the whole city bursts upon you, as you look down. We read the account, in Luke xix. 41–44, standing on the spot, and felt quite certain about it. From there it is about the most lovely view of the city, and He must have looked straight upon the Temple. Besides, this turn in the path only comes when you get quite near Jerusalem, with nothing between but the valley of Jehoshaphat, and it says, 'When He was come near, He beheld the city.' I cannot express to you what it was to stand there, perhaps upon the very stone on which He stood, and read how He wept over the city. One could so well understand how the sudden sight of Jerusalem, lying there amongst the hills, in all its beauty, would move Him. Oh, being in this land does bring out every Bible scene with such wonderful vividness. I shall be thankful all my life for this time.

"It was about six o'clock in the evening when we came home along the Mount of Olives. The shepherds were bringing in their flocks, and we watched them with much interest, as they came winding down the hill sides, the shepherds walking before, and all the sheep and goats following. . . .

"I enclose a few leaves which I picked for

you on the Mount of Olives. I like walking there as much as anywhere. It seems more closely associated with Jesus than any other place. I feel so thankful that the real garden of Gethsemane is not known. . . . The feeling that at any moment one may be walking through Gethsemane gives a solemn interest to a walk on the Mount of Olives. It is a wonderful thing to look at it and remember how it says that 'His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives.' Charles and I were wondering, yesterday, as we came home, how long it would be before we walked there *with Him*."

There is, in this letter, a long and beautiful description of the Jews' Wailing Place, and the sorrowful sight there to be seen. The rest of the letter tells of camp life, and steep and rocky rides around Jerusalem.

The next letter is to her mother :

"We have had such a delightful ten days here. . . . To-morrow we ride to Jericho. We shall have an escort with us, so you need not fear us 'falling among thieves.' We shall be riding along the very road from Jerusalem to Jericho mentioned in our Lord's parable.

"Yesterday we saw the Greeks' Holy Fire in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—the most strange and awful sight I ever witnessed. . . .

"I have such a beautiful horse. I have named

him 'Thalaba.' . . . Our dog we have named 'Kehama.' He was one of the wild dogs of which there are so many about in Palestine. He came prowling about our tents, so I fed him and petted him, and now he is quite tame and has attached himself to the camp. He is a large dog, something like a mastiff in shape and colour, only with a head like a fox. He always sits by me at dinner. . . ."

Before moving the next day she adds a postscript:

"Our tents are down; I am writing under an olive-tree. To-morrow I shall be bathing in the Dead Sea; next day in the Jordan. Charlie and I had a splendid swim in Solomon's Pools—enormous places. They were made by King Solomon—we thought it one of the wisest things he ever did! We shall camp near Jacob's well next Sunday.

"Goodbye, my precious mother,
"Ever your own loving,
"FLORRIE."

Later she wrote as follows:

"I must tell you one thing I noticed: wherever there was water in Bible times there is water now. The Dead Sea, the Sea of Galilee, the river Jordan, the Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, Gideon's spring, Elisha's fountain, the Pool of Siloam, Philip's fountain, in which

he baptised the Ethiopian—in fact, every river, pool or spring mentioned in the Bible is still to be found."

The next letter is to her sister Maudie, and is dated "Shechem, Samaria," and consists of twenty-four pages! It gives many amusing details of camp life, and tells of a delightful three days' camp under an apricot tree, on Mount Gerizim.

"We are very glad of a few idle days. It seems such a rest, after riding every day for five or six hours. I do not find the riding tires me at all, though it has been pretty rough work the last day or two, riding over the mountains. You would be surprised if you saw the sort of places we ride up—straight up steep rocks where English horses could never go. The horses out here are so used to it they scarcely ever slip. However, Thalaba, my horse, fell down the other day, while climbing one of these places. I tumbled myself off as fast as I could and got clear of him, before he began to get up again. I jumped up again directly, and Thalaba went on all right, neither of us any the worse for our come down."

She tells of an amusing bathe in the Dead Sea in which "it is quite impossible to sink, the water is so buoyant"; and of a bathe in

the Jordan, and another in Elisha's fountain. And of how she dived after a tortoise and brought him up and took him back to camp, and how, when she took him back to the stream, by moonlight, and put him down on the grass, "he fairly kicked up his legs behind him and galloped off to the water. I had no idea a tortoise could run such a pace; no wonder he beat the hare."

She tells of the snakes, too, and how she shot a very large one clean through the head with her revolver. She gives amusing pen sketches of the Arab servants, particularly of Khalil, the cook, who only knew one word of English—"goodbye"—and would come running out as they rode into camp to take her horse, saying "Goodbye, goodbye!" by way of welcome.

But much as she loved the East her heart evidently turned often to her own dear land, for at the end of this letter she suddenly remarks:

"I often long for dear old England. There is no country like it. Out here we have red buttercups and blue buttercups—the most brilliant colours—but I think if I saw a little yellow English buttercup I should almost jump off my horse with delight!"

It was during this stay in Samaria that my mother noticed something which she felt sure

threw light on a certain oft-quoted yet rather puzzling saying of Christ's, and also supplied a detail of the picture not given by the evangelist.

The Samaritans, she noticed, all dress in *white*. Hence, unlike the ordinary, gay-coloured Eastern crowd, a crowd of Samaritans is quite white. Now in the account given in chapter iv. of St. John's Gospel of the conversation between Christ and the woman of Samaria, we are told how she went back to the city and said, "Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him." But while He still waited by the well, alone, the disciples returned and pressed Him to eat, but He said, "I have meat to eat that you know not of. . . . My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. . . ." And the account ends with how the Samaritans came to Him, and took Him back to their city.

The very probable conclusion which my mother deduced, and which was a source of

great pleasure to her, was that Christ's words were not metaphorical. That when He said, "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields," He really meant it, and was pointing out the great white crowd flocking out over them from the city, to come to Him. Hence His use of the word "white" rather than "golden," and His bidding to the disciples to *look*. It was a great joy to my mother to feel that by her own observation and imaginative deduction she had been able to supply an important detail in one of the most beautiful gospel pictures, and discover what the eyes of Christ were resting on, as He spoke. It was points such as this which made her time in Palestine such a joy, and which helped to supply the realism of her conceptions of Christianity's beginnings. Such incidents seemed to span the nineteen hundred years (for the changeless East is much as it was in A.D. 30).

But to return to her letters. The next is from Damascus.

"We have arrived quite safely," she writes, "after a most successful and delightful journey up country. We have ridden about four hundred miles since we left Jerusalem. . . . How I wish I could tell you something of the places

of such deep interest to which we have been —Jericho, Bethel, Shechem, Samaria, Endor, Nain, Nazareth, Mount Tabor, Tiberias, and many others, but if I once began I should never know where to stop, and I have not much time for writing. One thing I must tell you, however. Charlie and I discovered the true mouth of Jacob's well, which has been buried for many hundreds of years beneath the fallen ruins of an old church, built over it as long ago as the 4th century, and which was quite a ruin as early as the 12th. It was a hard day's work, with the help of four Arabs, to clear away the rubbish and débris, and lay the old stone bare; but when we had finished we were indeed rewarded for our trouble. Without doubt we have found the very stone upon which our Blessed Lord sat when He rested and talked to the woman. There are two ledges, one on each side of the mouth of the well, which would most naturally be used as seats. There is the round hole in the rock down the sides of which the very grooves made by the ropes as they drew the water pots up and down are distinctly visible. We consider it by far the most interesting thing in Palestine. It is the one place of which we can be sure. The road from Bethany to Jerusalem is wonderful because we know that He must constantly have walked over it, but one cannot pick on any special stone and say: 'on this very stone His feet rested.' But of the mouth of the well there is no doubt. I have

not time to tell you more fully about it. I cannot describe to you what finding it was to us."

This find was, indeed, very remarkable. Accounts of the discovery were published in the *Times* and in the *Illustrated London News*, with a picture of the stone, while paragraphs referring to it appeared in a very large number of papers in the United Kingdom and the colonies. An official account is given in the large "Memoirs of the Survey of Western Palestine" and in the Statements of the Palestine Exploration Fund (reprinted in many books on Palestine).

Captain Conder (as he was then) visited the spot a few days later, and corroborated the fact that it was indeed a discovery of the utmost importance.

It remained one of my mother's most cherished memories all her life.

She and my father had ridden out from their camp on the slopes of Mount Gerizim, on the Sunday afternoon. Climbing down through the aperture in the roof of the ruined crypt—all that remained of the church built over the sacred spot—they saw the heap of rough boulders, with the irregular hole among them which

had hitherto been looked upon as the mouth of the well. They were much disappointed; for it was impossible to picture this a way-side resting place.

Feeling that there might be something more to find, and knowing that excavation would never be permitted by the Mahommedans, they determined to return later and make their own investigations.

Consequently, the next day, taking no attendants with them, they rode down to the spot, tied up their horses near by, and climbed down once again into the crypt.

It was heavy work removing the earth and stones, but they persevered, and after about two hours they were rewarded. Noticing a dark hole between the stones, my mother thrust her hand into it, and her arm disappeared up to the elbow. Feeling about the bottom, she found a smooth surface, unlike that of the other stones. More boulders were removed, and at last (to their intense joy and excitement), a great flat stone was revealed to view, with a round hole in the centre of it. This was blocked by a great bit of masonry, too heavy to be moved. Calling to their aid some *fellahin* who had gathered round, and with the help of their

A Camel Mount at Cairo.

THE CAMP AT JERUSALEM.

stirrup leathers, this also was shifted, and the well at last was clear.

Their delight was great, for they felt confident that they had indeed found the stone upon which Christ Himself had rested.

Her next letter is a very long one, begun at Baalbek and finished at Beyrout. She describes their camp on Lebanon, and her quaint experiences with the villagers. "All the inhabitants are Christians," she says. "It was most delightful after being so long amongst those wretched Mahommedans to find a little church in every village." Riding across the snow, they reached the cedars and camped at Ehden—"a little village about twice the height of Snowdon above the sea . . . a place where Europeans scarcely ever go."

Her next letter is dated "Constantinople, June 13," and describes the seven days' voyage.

"We steamed in and out amongst numbers of little islands. One at which we stopped was Chios, the scene of all those fearful earthquakes. Of course I was most anxious that there should be one while we were there, but we just missed it; there was one ten minutes before we got in!'

She tells of her delight at seeing the shores of Europe again—"dear, dear Europe, the

continent in which lies our little England "—and gives a beautiful description of their first sight of Constantinople, as they steamed up the Golden Horn at sunrise.

The next letter is written on the Danube, for they returned home across Europe by water.

"This is our fourth day on the Danube," she writes, "and slowly but surely we are nearing home! As I sit reading on the deck I often lay down my book and listen to the splash of the paddle wheels as they go round, and think to myself, 'Every turn brings us nearer home, nearer to dear Limehouse, nearer my precious mother,' and my heart jumps for joy!! . . . Some of the countries through which we have passed were rather interesting because of the last Russian war. We have been through Bulgaria, Walachia, Servia, Roumania, and are now in Hungary."

The next day she writes:

"Hour by hour and day by day as we glide along everything begins to look more like our own dear country. Mosques and minarets disappear, and in their stead come lovely little village churches, with their ivy-covered towers peeping out from amongst the trees, or here and there a white spire with a vane on the top, just like our dear old England! And the turban and fez are changed for caps and straw hats,

and the great baggy Eastern trousers gradually grow narrower and narrower, and horses and cows graze in the fields instead of camels and buffaloes, and everything says the same to us: 'You are going home, you are going home.' Home, *sweet* home! Before we reach England again I shall have been in *fifteen* countries, but I have not seen one which can be compared with our little island. . . . We get off the Danube on to the Rhine, and go down the Rhine as far as Cologne; then from Cologne to Brussels, from Brussels to Calais, from Calais to Dover, from Dover to Limehouse!"

Thus ended the journey my mother's eager heart had so greatly longed for. It had proved a real adventure; and there had been a great deal of fun about it, too. But above all it had been *satisfying* to her ardent soul. She had lived in the land that was "*home*" to the Son of God; she had visited the spots He loved, and grown to love them too. And now, with a full heart, she turned to England, to settle down to the hidden life of a quiet country village—truly her *Nazareth*.

IV: LIFE IN A COUNTRY PARISH

MY mother was not yet nineteen when a new life, full of responsibilities, opened before her.

For a time she had dreamed of stepping out before the world and finding in the musical profession the means of expression her ardent, artistic nature yearned for. In fact, her father had promised that she should go to the College of Music, where her wonderful voice would have been given its chance.

To a free, restless temperament like hers home ties might have seemed irksome ; but she entered with a whole-hearted generosity and selflessness upon her new tasks. She threw the whole of herself, of her full, rich, gifted personality, not only into her duties as worker and organiser in the parish, and friend of the poor, but as wife and mother and mistress of a household.

As was to be expected, she won the hearts of the people at once ; and her energy and genius in first devising things and then carrying them out, combined with her quick sympathy and

generous love, and animated by the spiritual motive at the back of it all, crowned her every effort with speedy success.

The first piece of work upon which she entered was a somewhat unusual undertaking for a girl of eighteen, but it was in response to a special request. It was the forming of a Men's Bible Class on Sunday afternoon. This gathering (a kind of informal service, with hymn singing and an address) was for *men*, not boys, and the question of the age-limit to be fixed came up. My mother laughingly pointed out that it must not be fixed over eighteen, or she would herself be excluded.

The class at once proved a great success, and the men of the village, young and old, flocked in. The simplicity and sympathy of the young speaker, combined with her enthusiasm and burning faith, went straight to the hearts of the men; while her easy confidence as a speaker and her joyous personality made listening to her a pleasure and inspiration. Before long the membership of the class was a hundred—practically every man in the village. This class continued quite regularly for nearly thirty years. The fame of it spread abroad, and a party of men used to walk up from Hertford (a mile and

a half) to attend it regularly. One of its members was a strange individual, who had previously had no belief in religion, but who now walked seven miles across country to attend the Men's Class.

But it was not only the men that were catered for; a "Mothers' Meeting" was very soon opened, to which virtually every woman in the place belonged. Here not only the spiritual wants of the women but their temporal needs were provided for, and my mother started a system (common nowadays, but then seldom practised) by which she bought large supplies of material wholesale, and then retailed it to the women, who paid instalments every week, and had each their own card upon which their payments were entered. Thus thrift was encouraged, and the poor were helped to help themselves. Other classes of various sorts were also opened.

Meanwhile my mother's home duties were increasing. In February her first child—a girl—was born (shortly after the death of her own mother—a very deep sorrow), and her family was gradually increased by the advent of two more girls and two boys. This meant, of course, an enlarged household and the anxiety of greatly increased expenses. Her health, too, had failed

somewhat. And yet she was always the same—gay, hopeful, energetic, and, above all, so youthful that strangers found it hard to believe she was the mother of five children. In fact those who found her playing in the garden with the children, in her simple white dress, her thick dark hair tied back in a coil on her shoulders, found it almost impossible to believe that she was not simply one of them—an elder sister. The children felt the same; and when a visitor one day enquired of them, "Which of you is the eldest?" "Mother's the eldest," was the reply, "and I come next!"

It was now that she devised what proved to be an intensely popular thing in the village. Finding that a good many of the villagers flocked to the public-houses on Friday nights, when the men returned with their wages, and that the family finances were thereby reduced for the rest of the week, she devised a counter-attraction—for her sympathy and understanding saw at once that the men only went to the "pubs" for lack of anything better to do. If they could only be kept happy elsewhere on Friday night, the money would get safely spent at market, on Saturday, and all would be well.

The counter-attraction was a wonderful

entertainment, of which she was stage manager and chief performer, but in which the men themselves took an active part. It was held in the Mission Room (a parish hall with a small stage or platform, and a minute lobby, which served as green-room). The entertainment was free of charge, and all were welcome. The room was thronged every week, people sitting in every available place, including the tops of cupboards, and standing packed like sardines at the back.

The programme was different every week—always some fresh excitement to keep everyone enthusiastic. It generally included a song or recitation in costume by my mother. She was a born actress, and could impersonate so perfectly as to take in even those who knew her intimately. Sometimes it was a song, such as "Caller Herrin'," my mother dressed in the short, striped petticoat of a fisher girl, with a basket full of herrings on her hip; another time Tennyson's poem, "The Grandmother," when spectacles, a mob cap, shawl, and white powder would transform her beyond recognition; or she would thrill the villagers to the marrow by turning into "Lady Macbeth," or send them out Shakespeare enthusiasts by her "Portia," or, dressed in black

HERTFORD HEATH VICARAGE.

With the Five Elder Children, 1886

velvet, make them creep by reciting Edgar Allan Poe's "Raven."

But not the least attractive items on the programme were those provided by the villagers themselves—especially the working men. These would gather for rehearsals, at which they would sing quaint songs not to be found in any book. My mother would soon catch the air, and work in an improvised accompaniment. Then, at the entertainment, the old traditional village song would come out, with a new, professional air about it, and bring the house down, being encored enthusiastically. Sometimes the words, passed on by word of mouth, had lost all sense, but no one seemed to mind. For instance, my mother could never fathom what was meant by the following picturesque couplet which occurred in an oft-repeated song, and was sung with emphasis and feeling by a vocalist of stentorian tones:

> "And I took the morning train
> Across the raging main . . . "!

A popular item, very frequently repeated, was the singing of Longfellow's "Village Blacksmith" by the real village blacksmith of Hertford Heath, with his sledge-hammer over his shoulder.

The programme also included humorous readings by my father, and sometimes songs by other friends. But my mother, her magnificent voice, her violin, and her radiant personality, was the real *pièce de résistance* of the whole proceeding.

A very professional touch was given to these entertainments by beautifully printed programmes! These were set up by my father on his own printing press. In fact, all the parish printing was done in this way, including the parish magazine. My father and mother would spend hours together at this work, she putting in and taking out the sheets, and he rolling and pulling.

Every night in the week was now taken up by one class or another, and the day was divided between family cares and visiting in the village. To her other activities my mother now added that of organist, playing for all the Church services and training the choir. This work was a particular joy to her, not only because she loved music in itself, but because it was to her the very essence of Divine worship. She continued to play the organ right up to the time my father resigned the living, in 1921.

Not only did she train the choir (a mixed

choir of male and female voices—no boys) but she trained the entire congregation, and would hold congregational practices, which were very popular, and meant that the entire congregation sang every chant, as well as the hymns, in perfect time, in tune, and with all their hearts. With their intelligences, too; for my mother was very particular about telling effects, and crescendos, diminuendos and rallentandos depended on the words of the hymns rather than merely on the tunes, and she dealt with these at her practices in a very illuminating manner. She was, in fact, a born musical conductor, and (to go on for a moment to a rather later period) she surprised the neighbourhood with a large choir of picked voices from several parishes round, which she trained, first for a Convention, and afterwards in carol-singing. Concerts were given in the Hertford Corn Exchange, and the choir sang at a large gathering which she organised to hear Lady Henry Somerset speak. The *real music* she got out of that choir was long remembered with enthusiasm. Her ear was marvellously accurate, and in those forty voices she would detect at once a single flat note, and know exactly who was the offender.

Every Saturday night she held the ordinary

Church choir-practices, and one who was a member of this choir for many years (and has had a good deal of experience of voice-training elsewhere) assures me that she never came across anything like it for thoroughness, inspiration, and all-round excellence. Her methods were original. She scarcely used the instrument at all, even in teaching a new tune or chant, depending entirely on her own voice. She would sing over the new air once or twice, and then make the choir sing it in unison to "*la*" (no words, yet), the altos, tenors, and basses gradually coming in with their parts, still with no instrument, merely reading from their score. To ensure good time (about which she was intensely strict) she would then make them sing the tune, counting the beats to the bar. At last they would get to the words—but not until these had been well explained and their real spirit and meaning appreciated.

Every kind of fault made by any voice she would imitate, slightly exaggerated, to make it more apparent, but never so as to make it sound ridiculous. She would then explain the cause of the fault, and persevere until it was overcome. (Wonderful to relate, she never offended anyone in spite of these methods.)

When at last the piece was perfectly known, *then* her organ accompaniment became an inspiration in itself.

She put her whole heart into this matter of Church music, and spent hours choosing it, combining chants, selecting the hymns, and searching the Scriptures for texts which specially brought out or stressed some meaning in the hymn, or suited some occasion or season, and which would be read out by my father before the singing of the hymn. The very voluntary she played before the service, or as the congregation went out, was an act of worship inspired by all the faith and devotion of her heart. She was greatly encouraged by Bishop Festing's words of unqualified praise, when he visited the parish in 1896. He was full of wonder that a village choir could produce such real music.

My mother always took a great interest in the sick of the parish; chiefly, of course, because her love and sympathy prompted her to help them; but also because medical science attracted her strongly. Had she been in a position to do so she would, she sometimes said, have entered the medical profession.

The help she was to the sick, and the deep

comfort of her presence with the dying, cannot be adequately described.

When every house was attacked by influenza, in some cases every member laid low, so that they could not nurse each other, and scarcely a single doctor was available, she took it upon herself to nurse the whole village.

All day and even half the night she would tramp in all weathers from house to house, administering remedies, and making the patients more comfortable. They would say that just the sight of her made them feel better, for she seemed the very embodiment of health and joy, and knew just the encouraging remark that would best cheer each patient. It was a marvel to everyone how she could stand the physical strain of those weeks; for at home my father was himself down with the epidemic, after weeks of hard work, while the children and most of the household were also in bed.

So much for my mother's work in the parish. This, in spite of the time and energy it required, did not tend to take her away from her children. If I give, here, the impression of her made on my mind at a very early age it is because a child's point of view is generally a very true one. The instinctive judgment of children, though biassed

by an almost passionate devotion, does seize on and remember essential characteristics.

We were, I suppose, what is called "naughty" children; and inclined to be rebellious against grown-up authority. But towards my mother we had a kind of passionate loyalty. It was a tenet of faith that "Mother" *could* not be "cross" or "angry," only "grieved." Moreover, she was always *right*, and altogether above the range of possible criticism. Also, with *her* one never dreamt of sulking or showing temper or irritation; and a command given by her *had* to be obeyed, whether in her presence or not. I cannot remember ever feeling even the smallest sense of irritation with her. This, I think, was because we knew that she was perfectly *just* (or, as we should have put it, "fair"). Also that her demands and rules were always *reasonable*. If she said "no," it was because there was a good reason, and not merely because she did not feel in the mood to say "yes." We knew she *would* have said "yes" if it had been at all possible; that she would have much *preferred* to say "yes"; that she never did or said anything merely to contradict us. We believed firmly that everything she did was because she loved us. Sometimes, when we had been very naughty with

other people, she would punish us severely, but we never resented it. Other people's punishments, on the other hand, would fill us with impenitent wrath. It was because we felt she hated punishing as much as we hated being punished that her punishments were never resented. We knew she always *understood;* that she would never laugh, and make us look silly. When I was quite a small child I thought of my mother as somewhere midway between God and ordinary people—but nearer God, if anything; certainly in a department by herself. There was, therefore, a certain awe and reverence in my love for her, and none of the casual familiarity of some children with their parents.

From our earliest years onwards my mother always took us for our Scripture lesson. In the very early days these consisted of stories graphically told. Hence I cannot remember a time when all the better-known stories of both the Old and New Testaments were not in my mind as brilliant pictures, and all the characters as familiar friends. She taught us, too, by games —especially one called "dreaming." In this each of us, in turn, rested our head on a sofa-cushion and pretended to go to sleep. We then began to dream aloud. Our dream had to be

some scene out of the Bible. One began with unimportant details, so as not to give a *clue* at once. Presently something well known would be "seen," and then anyone who recognised the episode called "Wake up!" and had to say what the dream was about, and if right, then take their turn at dreaming. *Our* dreams were not generally very ingenious, but I remember the fascination with which we listened, our eyes fixed on my mother's sleeping face, as some wonderful, vivid scene developed, detail by detail. Sometimes we forgot to say "Wake up!" even though we knew quite well what story she was dreaming, because we were too busy following in imagination the dramatic things she was seeing.

Later the scripture lessons became more elaborate: we would go through a whole book of the Old Testament, or one of the Gospels. I can still remember things she said when I was very small. She was a born teacher.

I remember the time (I was seven) when she taught us all the responses we ought to make in church. She said that we must not just gabble them like a lesson, but say them *meaning to pray*, otherwise they would only go up as far as the roof of the church, and not reach God. The

idea impressed me and stuck in my small mind.

Sometimes my mother's punishments were amusingly original. We had a phase of being silently insulting to each other (and to grown-ups) by facial expression. It was called "making faces." Sometimes it was a form of direct attack; but more often a last resort when words failed. Anyhow, it was a punishable crime in the nursery. At last the high court of my mother's authority was appealed to, and she devised a punishment which completely put a stop to the offence. She bought two wire masks, painted, one to look like a sweetly-smiling lady, the other like a very benign gentleman with a drooping yellow moustache. When brought to her for the crime of "making faces" we had to sit on chairs facing each other, and each wearing one of those masks. You could see through the painted wire-meshes perfectly well, and the gentle expression of the person opposite told you how sweetly foolish you were looking yourself. You could not resist *looking*, and the more you looked the more you loathed. There was one alternative to this punishment, namely, to make the original "face" *at my mother;* but we never chose that alternative.

My mother used to read aloud to us a great deal—Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales (which she delighted in herself); children's books, like "Little Lord Fauntleroy," "The Little Duke," etc., and, later on, Scott. At one time, when reading Scott, she told us to stop her every time we came on a word of which we did not know the meaning. This was then written down on a piece of paper, and the next day part of our schoolroom lessons was to find out the meanings of all these words with the help of our governess and a dictionary. It was characteristic of my mother that we never looked on this plan as a dull schooly thing, or as a tedious interruption to the story; rather, the reading became doubly thrilling, because there was the added excitement of the hunt after unknown words. It was just my mother's own enthusiasm for language that prompted the plan, and she herself always did everything as if it was an exciting game. Another book she read us was "Water Babies," out of the very copy she had bought with her own pennies as a tiny child. There must have been something very telling in the way she read, because those books she read aloud when I was six or seven are still fresh in my memory, while books read by other people, or to myself, have faded. She

herself had a theory that if the reader allowed his mind to wander from the sense of the passage, and did not visualise the scene depicted, the hearers would not grasp the sense and would also fail to visualise; hence she would sometimes read a paragraph over again, if she felt her mind had not been concentrated upon it. It was part of her strong belief in the effect of one mind on another.

The first ten years of married life had been full and fruitful, and she had indeed proved herself to be "in favour with God and man." But a time was approaching to which she had long looked forward. The thought of being *thirty* meant a very great deal to her, because it was at the age of thirty that Christ set out upon His public mission. Her own life was one of loving activity in the service of men and in obedience to the will of God; the life of Christ was her model and inspiration; and so the thought of living those years from thirty to thirty-three filled her with high resolves. One may guess that it was a deep disappointment and trial to find herself, after the first few months of this year, overcome by a painful and dangerous illness, which completely laid her low, and turned her into an invalid for nearly a year. The illness

was a form of peritonitis, and all but cost her life. Only the skill of the famous doctor, Sir Andrew Clark, and the careful nursing of devoted friends pulled her through; and even these would have been of no avail had it not been for her extraordinary vitality and recuperative powers.

On Easter Sunday her life was despaired of, and she herself thought her last hours on earth had come. But the next day there was a slight improvement. For seven weeks, however, she lay between life and death, the doctors holding out but small hopes of her recovery.

Then one day she suddenly said, "If I could be carried out into the sun I know I should get well."

A doctor would undoubtedly have forbidden that she should be moved, but my father knew her wonderful instinct about such things. A stretcher was fetched, and she was carried out and laid on a couch, on the tennis-court, in the blazing sun. With a sigh of contentment she closed her eyes and fell into a quiet sleep, lying so for two hours, her frail body seeming to drink in the life and light and warmth. From that day she began to get well. Her recovery was a matter of real wonder to Sir Andrew Clark.

Now began a long, tedious time of convalescence. The rôle of invalid was one which was

the greatest possible trial to my mother. Her energy, her enjoyment of life, her naturally bounding health, made long hours of lying still, and the necessity of going out in a bath-chair very irksome. But her patience, courage, and joyousness never flagged. The first of the three years that she considered the sacred age was certainly passed with Christ-like heroism. But it contained a no less Christ-like service too ; for from her couch she would give the most beautiful and carefully prepared addresses and Bible studies to the ladies of the village, who assembled weekly at the Vicarage. This gathering she termed a Ladies' Bible Reading, and it was the beginning of what later became one of her chief activities and enthusiasms. Her methods of Bible study were original and full of thought, the result of long study and meditation and much prayer to God the Holy Spirit for enlightenment.

By the autumn of 1893 her strength had almost returned, and in November her fourth daughter was born. Another followed a year later.

Her health now quite restored, she was able to start again on all her old parish activities.

Every year the family spent six or seven weeks in the Isle of Wight, where my father had

bought a delightful little house, the garden sloping right down to the seashore. In addition to this holiday, when my mother would enter with youthful enthusiasm into all the amusements of her family—bathing, boating, etc.—she also had ten days of spiritual refreshment at Keswick, where a great convention for Bible study and spiritual addresses took place every year. This was a great delight to her; especially as, between the meetings, there was boating on the lake and long mountain walks.

My mother was much interested in the question of telepathy and mental influence. She herself possessed what would, I suppose, be called in modern jargon "psychical gifts" of a very peculiar sort. One of these was a form of clairvoyance I have never heard of in anyone else, namely, the power of finding lost things, so long as she had at one time or another touched the object. As children it was to us a matter of course that mother could find anything lost, though the mysterious power filled us with wonder and admiration. What she did was simply to make her mind a blank, and then suddenly go straight to the place where the thing lay concealed, and put her hand upon it. If the object was inaccessible, she would insist

on furniture being moved until it could be reached.

For instance, my father once lost the signet ring my mother had given him. He had no idea where he had lost it, but searched thoroughly in every conceivable place. In despair he at last appealed to her. She did not search, but, after pausing a moment, went straight up to a large wooden chest in which he kept the type for his printing-press.

"Your ring is behind it," she said.

"It can't possibly be," said my father; "there isn't room between the chest and the wall. Besides, how could my ring have got there?"

"But it *is* there," said my mother; "you must have the chest moved."

The chest was so heavy that moving it was impossible without emptying its contents. My father thought it hardly worth while, considering how little likelihood there was of the ring being behind it. However, my mother persisted, and the type was taken from the chest and it was drawn away from the wall. To his surprise, there was the ring!

This same ring was again lost some years later and found by my mother in an almost more curious way, for in this case there was

no possibility of a guess, or of any explanation founded on telepathy.

After having searched high and low, my father came to her and told her of the loss. She stood quite still for a moment, and then went up to him and took the edge of his coat between her finger and thumb.

"Here it is," she said.

Sure enough the ring could be felt beneath her fingers, in the lining of the coat, having slipped through a hole in the pocket. It should be noticed that it was not that the *idea* occurred to her that it was in the lining, and that she then proceeded to feel for it. No idea came to her—she simply felt irresistibly drawn to place her hand upon the ring, wherever it was, and so without hesitancy picked on the exact spot in the lining of the coat.

There were many other instances of this curious faculty. To mention the first that occurred, and the last.

She lost one of her dormice when she was about eight years old. Everyone had searched for it. It occurred to my mother, during family prayers, to pray that she might find it. No sooner were prayers over than she felt impelled

to go up to a bookcase and take out the large old family Bible, seldom moved. There, curled up in a little ball behind it, was her dormouse!

Not long ago she was staying in an hotel with my youngest sister, who was much distressed at finding she had lost a treasured brooch. She was sure she had left it on her dressing-table. She told my mother what had happened, and asked her to find the brooch "her way."

My mother did not look at the dressing-table, but at once dived under the bed, drew forth a suit-case, and, thrusting her hand under the tissue paper, slipped it into the torn lining of the case, and drew forth the brooch.

She always said that she could not find a thing unless she had herself touched it.

Things of her own had a way of doing what she termed "calling out to her" if inadvertently lost or stolen. Here are two instances which I often heard her recount.

She had an umbrella, with a black-and-silver crook handle. She had bought it at the time when the nation went into mourning for Queen Victoria. It was a great treasure, and she always called it "the umbrella with which I mourned for Queen Victoria"!

One day, as she sat in a railway compartment,

"The umbrella with which I mourned for Queen Victoria suddenly called out to me, wildly," she would tell us.

She looked about to see what *could* have befallen her faithful umbrella to account for this, and found that it had mysteriously disappeared from the place where she had stood it. Looking across at the lady in the opposite corner, she noticed that propped up by her was a bundle—her parasol and umbrella wrapped round in a large fold of paper, only the two handles sticking out. The lady was a mild and inoffensive-looking little person, but my mother knew without a shade of doubt that in that bundle was concealed the umbrella with which she mourned for Queen Victoria!

Not wishing to make a scene in the carriage, she waited until the train stopped at Liverpool Street Station and the occupants of the compartment got out. She kept close to the lady, and then was able to see the other end of the bundle, from which protruded *three* ferruled sticks!

She touched the lady on the arm. "Excuse me," she said, "but you have my umbrella in your bundle." The lady of course protested that she knew nothing of my mother's umbrella.

But my mother only smiled quietly. "Oh, yes," she said, "it's there in your bundle. Please remove the paper and give it back to me."

Rather flustered, and as if she found it impossible to disobey or continue to protest, the lady unwound the wrapping and handed my mother her umbrella.

One day she had unpacked a small suit-case in a station waiting-room, and having packed it up again, was about to leave the place, when something "called to her, frantically, from a certain chair." Upon the chair reposed a very stout lady. Still, so certain was my mother that something of hers was upon that chair, that she went up to the lady and, with the disarming smile that always conciliated the least affable of strangers, remarked:

"Excuse my troubling you, but I think you are sitting on something of mine."

The stout lady arose, surprised, and lo, one of my mother's little fur caps was revealed, much flattened!

There were no abnormal conditions or phenomena connected with her spiritual life, beyond very striking objective answers to prayer and the fact that certain things, which afterwards turned out contrary to her desires, she would,

as she said, be "kept from praying for." It was not that consciously she omitted to pray, but that the thought would mysteriously vanish from her mind and somehow would never get prayed for.

She was not given to having premonitions, but on three occasions she seemed to hear a warning voice, and by acting upon the warning averted a calamity.

The first was as follows:

She was driving herself home from the station in a light dogcart. Suddenly she seemed to hear a voice close to her ear say, "Drive slowly, or you will regret it all your life." She drew in the horse a little, but continued to go at a fairly brisk trot. Twice, however, the warning was repeated, so that she felt impelled to go at little more than a walk as she rounded a corner which, as a rule, she took at a good pace.

Suddenly, from the back of a dray, a tiny, curly-haired boy darted across the road, literally under the horse's hoofs. She pulled him up short; but had she been going any faster the child must have been knocked down and run over.

The second occasion was in the Isle of Wight. A lot of us were going bathing. My mother

was sitting writing and had no intention of bathing that afternoon. But a voice said in her ear: "Go with them." She obeyed, and was ever after *thankful* she had done so: for save for her skilful and timely assistance one of my younger sisters, who was not a strong swimmer like the rest of us, would most certainly have been drowned.

The third time was in an air raid. A Zeppelin was overhead. A strange, rushing sound filled the air, and no one knew what it meant. "It's a bomb," said a voice in my mother's ear. Seizing my youngest sister, she flung herself on the ground. Had she not done so the concussion of an enormous bomb exploding near by would have thrown them down with great violence, while pieces of flying metal would have been far more likely to strike them than when lying flat. My mother always said that in these three cases it was not a mere premonition, but that the *words* were distinctly spoken close to her ear.

No one could tell my mother a lie without being immediately detected. She could thought-read very well. This and other psychical gifts and tendencies she could easily have developed had she wished to, but she believed such gifts

to be unnatural, too great a strain on the mind, and not intended for use in this life.

She had an intense horror of spiritualism, and she believed that to have anything whatever to do with it would be grave sin, and a violation of God's laws. Such things were absolutely forbidden by God in the early days of His divine revelations, as recorded in the Old Testament; again in the New those who tampered with occult powers were uncompromisingly condemned; and in the Middle Ages all witchcraft, magic, and communication with spirits was strictly forbidden by the Church.

She had seen people lose all peace of mind, all faith in God through tampering with this forbidden subject, which made her conclude that spiritistic phenomena were due to diabolical influence. Hence, she would never allow any kind of dealings with such things—even "table-turning" or "planchette"—as a form of amusement.

Her horror of spiritualism was partly due to an experience of her childhood. She was staying with two friends in a small hotel in Switzerland, convalescing after typhoid fever. An Italian count was also staying in the hotel. He was a spiritualistic medium, and

held frequent *séances* to which numbers of the guests would go. He chanced to be occupying the room adjoining my mother's, and there was a communicating door. As she lay awake at night she would hear the count pacing restlessly, madly, up and down, up and down his room, hour after hour, groaning, arguing, pleading, now raising his voice in protest, now mumbling low or whispering hoarsely. It was the sound of a soul in utter despair. Often the speaking was so continuous that it was hard to believe that only one person was in the room. After a few nights of this my mother's friends insisted on the hotel authorities changing her room. She was glad, however, to have had the experience, for it made a deep and lasting impression on her mind, and acted as a very potent warning against this subtle spiritual danger.

The tremendous increase and popularity of spiritualism in these days distressed her deeply, and she restrained many people from taking part in it.

She possessed the power of "mental-suggestion" very strongly, and this, combined with a magnetic power in her hands, enabled her to effect the most wonderful cures, by a kind of

massage. There were numerous instances of this, and many people had reason to be grateful to her. To mention two:

A neighbouring farmer's wife had for years been rendered almost helpless by rheumatism. My mother drove over the five miles during several successive weeks, and applied her form of massage, effecting a complete and lasting cure.

In Switzerland my father slipped and sprained his ankle very badly. The doctor gave him no hope of being able to walk for at least three weeks, and he lay in agony, quite unable to put his foot to the ground. My mother felt sure that she could cure him. At first his ankle was so intensely tender that he could not bear the lightest touch. She began by making passes over it, then laying her hands gently on it, and, as the pain grew less, giving the massage. By the time she had done, the pain had completely gone, and the next day the doctor was astounded to see my father walking about as usual, and, a few days later, skating and tobogganing once again.

From the earliest years at Hertford Heath her friendship, sympathy, and counsel were sought by those who were in both spiritual and material difficulties. Her power of consoling, reassuring, giving hope and inspiring new resolves was very

wonderful, and lay largely, I think, in the way she always gave her *whole mind* to the one seeking her help. She would bring her whole personality to bear upon the case, as if nothing else mattered in all the world. Those in difficulties would feel they had her whole attention, her full sympathy, all the kindness and strength of her heart. They would, as it were, relax the strained and anxious tension of their minds, letting the strength of hers support them. Then, filled with her buoyant hope, enlightened with a new vision, aided by sound advice, and often materially assisted, too, they would go on their way, consoled. Considering her busy life, and the many calls on her attention, this calm and collected power of concentration must be recognised as a very special gift. She told me once herself that, however busy, however distracted with a multitude of things to be done and little time in which to do them, if any one came to see her she would never let them get the impression that she was in a hurry or occupied. A quarter of an hour of her whole attention would draw out what was in their minds, and she would probably be able to deal with them to their entire satisfaction; whereas, had they been conscious of hurry they would have become

flurried and inarticulate, and gone away with a sense of disappointment. Even in quite trivial matters she observed this rule of concentrated attention and the atmosphere of leisure.

Another characteristic trait arising from her sympathy and genuine love of humanity was her attitude towards those with whom every-day circumstances brought her in touch. To her, no one ever appeared to bear a wholly formal and conventional relation with herself. It was not only that she took interest in the particular individual; she felt any service performed for her was a matter for real gratitude, and that the stranger who served her became related to her through the service. In shops, for instance, the girl who served her at the counter, or the proprietor who stepped forward courteously to make sure she was being supplied with what she wanted, was, to her, a fellow human being who for the moment had really come into her life. She would be genuinely grateful for the trouble taken to supply her requirements, never looking upon it as a matter-of-course. So that a bit of shopping was not a mere business transaction, but a human little episode in which her need brought her into contact with a fellow man, and became a link between

them—he trying to please her, she grateful for his help. As you stood by, you could not help feeling that the mere serving of her over the counter was being a source of pleasure; that the assistant was feeling that here was a friend; and the smile as they parted would be one of mutual sympathy. It was so in shops where she was a complete stranger; but as to the shops where she went habitually—here were her true friends: and one realised it vividly if one spent a day in town with her. London seemed full of her personal friends, known by name, with an interest taken in their private concerns; and everywhere she was greeted by name, too, and with radiant smiles.

I have only mentioned shopping as a case in point. The same applied to all circumstances which brought her in touch with her fellows: such circumstances were an opportunity to make new friends. In the stations which she used frequently the inspectors and guards were her friends, known by name, and always ready to assist her in any way they could, or at least come up with a word of greeting as she hurried for her train.

One of my mother's rules of life was not only never to make uncharitable remarks about

other people, but carefully to avoid even thinking critical thoughts about strangers. She used to say, "If you see anyone who looks quaint or badly dressed, don't send them a thought that will make them feel uncomfortable or unhappy." She taught us this as children: and to the end of her life, as she walked with a companion in the streets, she would never allow a critical remark, or a laugh at another's expense.

It became quite a joke with one of her friends, who would say: "Oh, look at that funny person!" To which my mother would respond: "How lovely the sunshine is, through the trees!"

She disliked travelling or using a taxi on Sunday. If she had to, she would always give an extra generous tip, *because* it was Sunday; and her tips were always accompanied by a smile and often a kind word. During the war she used to carry about with her a tiny booklet containing simply that comforting Psalm "Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High" (Ps. 91.) She would give these to Tommies or to people whom she discovered had sons at the war, and they always seemed to give such pleasure. One Christmas she carried with her a little Christmas booklet for children which particularly

appealed to her, and would ask her taxi-driver, when she paid him, if he had any small boys and girls. If he had, she would give him a copy.

My mother had a very great and loyal devotion to Queen Victoria. As children, she brought us up to have a real reverence for "the Queen." The National Anthem she taught us to regard as specially sacred: even the tune she would not let us strum on the piano. She would seize every opportunity of seeing the Queen drive out in her carriage, whether in London or at Cowes. One of my own earliest memories is seeing the Queen at Cowes; and I suppose it is impressed on my memory because of my mother's anxiety that we should see and realise who it was.

It was on one of these occasions when we had rowed out and tied up our boat quite close to the royal yacht that the following little incident occurred.

As the Queen passed slowly along the gangway on to her yacht, Princess Beatrice drew her attention to the boatful of happy children below, and pointing out one of my sisters who had a wealth of auburn hair about her shoulders, remarked:

"What glorious hair that child has!"

The Queen looked down with kindly interest, and that look was a source of real pleasure to one of the most loyal and devoted of her subjects.

At one of the Red Cross Sales she bought a ring of Queen Victoria's, given her by her governess, Baroness von Lehzen, on her wedding day—February 10, 1840. It had been presented to the sale by Princess Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein, and my mother was greatly delighted at having been able to buy it. It was one of her greatest treasures. Later she gave it to her great friend, Miss Phyllis Lett.

I well remember my mother's grief at the Queen's death: one would have thought it was one of her personal dear ones that had passed.

But to return to her history. In 1900 her eighth child was born—the "Angela" to whom "The Rosary" is dedicated.

Meanwhile, her activities had spread beyond the bounds of the little country parish, and speaking engagements were more and more taking her from home.

In 1905 she found herself again laid low by illness—her heart this time, strained by over-exertion in a long bicycle ride. She was confined to her room for nine months and nursed devotedly

by one of my sisters. It was during this illness that she wrote "The Rosary," though it was not published for some years.

In 1909 and 1910 she visited America.

Outside calls became very numerous and her correspondence was enormous. The production of a long novel every year also took time. She therefore gradually handed over her village activities to other willing helpers, and faced the work of a larger sphere. Always, however, she clung to her post of organist, and would make every effort to be at home for Sundays, in order not to miss accompanying the services. Often this meant long and weary journeys, or the giving up of an attractive engagement; and latterly, when a very painful illness had attacked her, she would play the organ under conditions when most people would be lying on a couch, groaning. Her courage was indomitable, and it was impossible to persuade her not to go to the services, or to give up this or that engagement. As someone has well expressed it, "she had the courage of a hero and the heart and gaiety of a child."

This, then, is an outline of my mother's life at Hertford Heath. The history of these thirty-nine years will be filled out and coloured in the chapters which follow.

PORTRAIT, 1890.

With the Three Younger Children, 1901.

V: OF SWIMMING AND OTHER SPORTS

THE picture of my mother would be incomplete were I to leave out her intense enjoyment of physical activity of every sort. It was simply her radiant health, her irrepressible energy seeking its natural outlet—for with her there was no thirst for competition, for mere exhibition, for the performance of feats.

As a matter of fact she excelled in every form of sport she took up, and had she cared to specialise in it, her physical strength, powers of endurance, courage, cool-headedness, quickness of eye and sure dexterity would have won for her a place in the ranks of the "champions." But she cared nothing for laurels. All she wanted was to satisfy her instinctive need of movement, to enjoy the feeling of abounding life to the full. So long as her own children and immediate friends shared her simple enthusiasm in the accomplishment of the moment that was all that mattered.

Though she enjoyed games, it was the purely natural activities, like walking, riding, swimming, that pleased her most. My mind is full of

brilliant little pictures of sunny scenes, my mother the centre of them, seeming to concentrate in her own personality all the sunshine, all the joy of existence, all the energy of human life. Here are some of the pictures that I see.

Blazing sunshine on the sparkling snow. Overhead a sky of pure, fathomless blue. On every side, some near and accessible, others vast and distant, range upon range of mountains, snow-covered, pine-clad. In the foreground, my mother, her face tanned to a wonderful bright brown, clad in a short skirt, and grasping a *ski* stick. All she wants is to get away, walking, walking, then climbing, on and on, up and up the steep mountain paths, until she is far up in the rare, cold air, among the brown rocks, the stubby firs, the stretches of untrodden snow. She takes with her one companion, a meagre meal of biscuits and fruit, and is gone. The rest of us take ourselves off to our more artificial forms of sport—tobogganing, ski-ing, skating; to the gay life of St. Moritz. . . .

That evening, when the sky has turned a luminous green, the last streaks of orange already faded from it, as the first bright stars prick out and the twilight has transformed the shadowy

snow to a mysterious purple, appears my mother, down from her mountain heights, still full of energy and life, but *satisfied*. She has found more joy in that day of simple exercise than we in all our elaborate sports.

She would spend whole days like this, too, in the mountains of the Lake District, climbing up above the Falls of Lodore, perhaps, and tramping along the top of the range for hours and hours. She never seemed to get to the end of her strength and powers of endurance.

A hot morning of sun and steady clouds, the sea, blue in the distance, and a clear, cool green in the rocky pools; my mother, clad in her dark-blue swimming costume, eager to get into another element, and feel herself master of that, too. Into the green depths she dives, down, down, down, until she is lost to view. Presently she appears again on the surface, shakes the drops from her face and hair, and, cleaving the water with strong, steady strokes, swims away into the distance, out of sight and hearing of human-kind, to be alone, for a little, with sea and sky, and the gulls that swoop and circle on silver wings. After a time she reappears, the salt dried in silver rime on her face, to enter with youthful enjoyment into a jolly bathe with her family.

A white stone is thrown into the water, and three or four of us dive after it, but it is usually "Mother" who gets there first, and rises triumphant, the stone held up in her brown hand.

A boat full of children comes out, and she delights them by diving beneath it and appearing on the other side.

Once, during a summer holiday in the Isle of Wight, she conceived a desire to swim out to the "Warner" lightship, two and a half miles across the Solent. She was warned that the currents were very strong, and it would be a good deal more than a two and a half miles' swim, on account of these. I believe she would have set out alone, for she knew no fear. My father, however, insisted on accompanying her in a boat. She reached the "Warner" as fresh as she set out, and after dressing in the captain's cabin, rowed gaily home.

So sure was she of herself in the water that she was not afraid to swim out on her back with her nine-months-old baby crowing with delight on her chest! And she would take her little monkey, "Bacco," with her when she swam far out. He was a wonderful swimmer himself, and would dive off her chest and swim under the water much further than any human being could, his

little black head popping up again in the distance just when she had begun to get anxious at so long a disappearance.

One of my own earliest memories (I was not yet three) is of sitting in a canoe and my mother paddling me far out to sea, till the houses on the shore looked far, far away, and there was no sound but the soft swish and ripple of the green water.

She loved rowing, too, and would pull a long, steady stroke for hours at a time, both on the sea and on the English Lakes.

Bicycling was a great delight at one time—real, long, lonely rides for hours and hours along the smooth high roads. Once she started in the very early morning, with only the larks awake as yet and the dew still white on the grass, and arrived to breakfast with my brother, at Cambridge!—a thirty mile ride. Another time she rode from Hertford Heath to Cromer (120 miles) in one day.

There is an amusing little story of an early visit to Switzerland which shows how she naturally excelled at sports, caring little for recognition.

My mother and father were staying at Maloja, in 1890, as my mother was badly needing the tonic of some Swiss mountain air. She had, of

course, thrown herself with keen enjoyment into the winter sports, especially the pass tobogganing—for the long winding pass from Maloja to Vico Soprano, once the snow was well beaten down, formed a splendid toboggan run of nearly five miles.

My mother had become quite expert at this sport, but entirely for its own exhilarating fun, and not with a view to competition of any sort. The faster tobogganing on the artificial run did not please her so much, though she did that, too, sometimes. When a ladies' race on this run was organised it did not occur to her to enter.

She was, however, pressed to do so by the other visitors at the hotel, in order to fill the place of someone who had fallen out, and make up the full number of entries. It was made quite clear to her that she stood no chance at all, on her old-fashioned Swiss toboggan, against the new, swift American type, and that she was merely being asked to oblige.

She agreed to enter; and to herself she said, "If I ride, I ride to win."

There was great excitement over the race, and one or two sporting ladies were looked upon as far and away the favourites, and bound to carry off

the prizes. The heats began, and the stop-watch duly recorded the number of seconds. Little interest was taken in the start of the stranger on the Swiss toboggan; but as she flew down the run, lying back quite flat, swinging neatly round the corners, and scarcely touching the ground at all with her pegs, the onlookers realised that here was a likely winner! When her *time* was called it proved, indeed, to be the best done in that heat.

The same thing happened in the following heats, and at the end of the race my mother found herself being loudly applauded as the winner by the men and eyed indignantly by the disappointed ladies! It was a typical instance of her success at such sports and of her determination to *win* if she entered into competition with others, though she cared little for doing this, in reality.

She was a graceful skater; and though she did little ski-ing, she seemed to take to it naturally, and could enjoy an afternoon on the slopes around St. Moritz or Grindelwald, seeming to need no instruction in the art, or any assistance.

Golf she played a good deal at one time, and tennis too; but perhaps her most characteristic connection with games was the cricket club for the

ladies of the village, which she ran in connection with her Bible reading, from 1894 to 1897.

She trained the team herself, and formed two elevens (the "Cardinals" and the "Blues"—she being the captain of the "Cardinals") which met and played matches almost every week during the summer in the Vicarage field. Some of the members were middle-aged mothers of families, but all entered into the game with a joy and zest probably caught from that of their captain.

The same ladies she put through a course of Sandow's physical training a few years later. She went through a professional course, herself, in London, and then formed a regular class at Hertford Heath. The ladies made themselves the approved costumes, and attended regularly, every week. March tunes played on the piano assisted and enlivened proceedings. Many of the members testified to the enormous improvement in their health, and continued to practise the exercises when the classes at last came to an end. My mother had a theory, which she often mentioned at this time, that happiness in *spiritual life* depended much more than people realised upon the physical condition, and that Sandow exercises were of real value to the *soul*!

My mother enjoyed motoring intensely, and she and her devoted chauffeur, "John," covered many hundreds of miles together. My youngest sister accompanied her on many of these trips, and was struck by my mother's surprising "bump of locality." They would be making for some place to which she had never been before. The road would be hard to find, sign-posts of little help. But she would quite confidently tell her chauffeur which road to take—and often he would do it quite against his own judgment and the apparent indications of map or sign-post. But my mother always proved right. She herself could not explain how she knew the way: it was an instinctive sense of direction, a curious impulse to take one road rather than another.

During the war, when motoring became impossible for lack of petrol and a chauffeur, all her old enjoyment of driving a horse returned, and she would drive her big grey about the country roads. She was devoted to him, and he had always been used to his lump of sugar. When sugar became a rationed luxury my mother felt she could still give him his lump as she did not herself take sugar in her tea, so that he really shared her ration! Even in

restaurants she would carefully save the lumps of sugar provided in the little paper cornets for each person, and take these home for Grey Boy.

To the end of her life my mother remained untiringly active. Only a fortnight before her death she walked nearly five miles, exploring again the favourite haunts of her childhood in the lanes round Limpsfield, and showing my youngest sister that spot made sacred by the dream of her babyhood—Sandy Lane.

VI: OF MANY ANIMAL FRIENDS

A VERY characteristic thing about my mother was her love of animals, and a very remarkable thing about her was the strange, almost mysterious power she had over them. It was not that she hypnotised them; she simply won their affection. Because they trusted her they ceased to fear her, they obeyed her, they rejoiced to be with her—and it was shy, wild birds and beasts she won, as well as pets.

To begin with she loved *life* in itself. Life seemed to her a precious gift—the greatest gift of the Creator. Life was to her a sacred thing. She believed the life of every little animal was a thing to be respected, *just because* (unlike a human soul, with its certainty of everlasting survival) *its life is all it has.* The phrase was often on her lips. It testified to her instinctive sympathy and justice, as well as to her all-embracing love. "Oh, don't kill it!—its little life is all it has," she would say, even about an insect. And the real anxiety on her face

as she pressed forward, with gentle fingers eager to rescue, showed a genuine impulse of the heart.

The following amusing little incident illustrates this enthusiasm for life. It was during a recent visit to Cromer. A fisherman stopped her in the street, offering to sell her a fine lobster, "all alive, mum!" At first she turned away with the sorrowful sense of resignation she forced upon herself with regard to the necessary taking of life. But looking back she saw the beautiful, shining blue-black of the lobster, his waving antennæ, his poor claws opening and shutting despairingly, and his eyes (to her) almost appealing! Her sympathy went out to him in a flood of "sweet unreasonableness," and she bought him.

Holding him carefully she hastened down to the sea, and joyfully placed him in the cool, refreshing water. Anxiously she watched. He moved his feelers, stretched his legs and claws as if uncertain whether it was true that he was actually back in his own element, and then, with a great dart of joy, sped out into the deep. That *giving back* of life to a wild creature filled her with a thrill of joy—a faint reflection, perhaps, of the joy of the Creator in *giving* life!

But she never allowed herself any foolish weakness in the matter, such as a refusal to sanction the *necessary* taking of life, or in adopting fads like vegetarianism, or subscribing to the sentimental societies which put animal life before the crying human needs of the day. Still, all killing for sport she abhorred; while cruelty to animals called forth a blaze of indignation.

Few things caused her such genuine pleasure as the affection and trust of wild animals—especially birds. Several robins, thrushes, and even common little sparrows she tamed at different times; but one thrush, in particular, she loved, and his story is remarkable enough to be worth telling in detail.

He lived in the old-fashioned and secluded garden of her beloved "Corner House," at Overstrand. A most beautiful thrush he was, with a great speckled chest and the biggest, brightest of bright eyes. She named him Hydrangea: he seemed to demand an imposing-sounding name.

By infinite gentleness and patience she won his confidence. At first it was for crumbs or meal-worms he came. But after a while it was for love. She had but to whistle his own

particular call, and, with a rush and whirr of wings, there would be Hydrangea at her feet on the grass, or perched on the arm of her chair.

No meal on the verandah would be complete without Hydrangea—he was always one of the party. And in and out of her writing-room he would come and go at pleasure.

As if he knew the joy and inspiration he was to her, he would sit on a rose-tree and sing to her while she wrote—sing from the depths of his joyous, free, loving bird-heart; but every now and then he would swoop down on to her chair to see how she was getting on, cocking a wise, bright eye at her manuscript.

In the nesting season he would, of course, woo and win a beautiful (but shy) wife, and very proudly he would bring her into the writing-room, to be introduced to his human friend. At first the wife would not be very sure if she approved of this somewhat unusual attachment of her mate's; but she would come in with him from the first, and after a time would grow quite bold. Soon, however, the building of the nest having been accomplished, she would find herself tied at home; and Hydrangea would appear alone once more, and just a little

distrait. His visits would be shorter and less frequent, too.

My mother would find his nest, of course, and call daily to inquire after Mrs. Hydrangea and the eggs.

And then, one day, Hydrangea would fly in, in a perfect fluster of excitement—his babies were hatched!

The meal-worms my mother kept in a tin and threw to him, or held on her palm for him to take, were, apparently, the very best diet for the children, and he would appear for a supply as soon as my mother was down in the morning. The wonderful thing was that Hydrangea proved himself capable of doing perfectly accurate mental arithmetic. If he knew that there were three wide, yellow beaks at home he would not dream of flying away with *one* meal-worm, or *two*: he would wait quite persistently for *three*. If *four* were given him he would go on waiting, pick up the fifth, and stand with a bunch of meal-worms sticking out each side of his beak like whiskers, and wait patiently for the sixth, or even the ninth! Nothing would make him go away unless he were carrying a multiple of three. The same if he had four children: he must then have four

or eight worms. He never made a mistake, and my mother tested him over and over again.

The amount the young Hydrangeas ate was amazing. Their father was busy with them all day, and his visits were only business ones, now.

Then would come the day when they were old enough to leave the nest. Hydrangea would conduct them to a certain lilac-bush and make this the family headquarters. From this bush he would bring the babies out on to the lawn, where, like fat, speckly balls they would sit, with wide beaks, keeping their energetic father busy. My mother used to be amused at Hydrangea's little ruse for concealing the family abode. He never by any chance brought a baby *straight* out of the lilac-bush on to the lawn, but always went round a very circuitous route, by way of flower-beds, and emerged from quite another corner, as if the hiding-place of the babies was really a certain rose-bush.

When at last his sons and daughters were sufficiently grown up to be able to fly, he would proudly bring the whole family into my mother's writing-room, and introduce them. They would sit on the carpet, very round-eyed and surprised, but evidently enjoying the adventure, and especially the meal-worms.

And then would come the strange day when Hydrangea, seeing his children old enough to cater for themselves, would quite suddenly harden his heart against them; and soon he would be busy building another nest.

All this happened season after season, and for four successive years it was a delight to my mother. Hydrangea spent the winter abroad. But no sooner did he arrive back in the early spring than he would make straight for my mother's window, deeply distressed if she was away and it was closed. As soon as the caretaker arrived and opened it, he would dart in and search every room in the house, hoping to find his friend. The caretaker would then write off at once to my mother to announce: "The Bird has arrived," and if at all possible my mother would hasten to spend a few days at the Corner House to welcome Hydrangea home.

But one spring a tragedy occurred. Hydrangea had wooed and won a mate ("Sarah Maria"), built his nest, and she was duly sitting on four beautiful spotted eggs. He was full of anxious joy, and my mother was all interest and sympathy. But one morning Hydrangea came to her *distraught*. After flying round

and swooping down in agitated darts, he took up his position on the top of a rose-arch, and began to give forth the most piercing shrieks. It was a sound my mother had never heard before from any bird. It was the voice of one distraught, almost demented. Rightly she guessed that it was the cry of a broken heart, and that her bird-friend had come to share with her some overwhelming grief, as so often he had shared his bursting joy in life.

Full of anxiety she hastened to the place where the nest was hidden, Hydrangea flying with her, still shrieking wildly. And then my mother saw the piteous sight: the nest rumpled and deranged, no precious eggs in it, and just a pair of legs and a few feathers all that was left of "Sarah Maria." A rat had attacked the nest, and the brave little mother had stuck to her eggs to the bitter end.

My mother was deeply grieved, and returned to her writing-room full of sorrow, her heart bleeding for her bird-friend, as he stood high on the rose-arch, venting his agony in piercing voice, inconsolable—even by meal-worms.

It was characteristic of my mother that she prayed that her dear Hydrangea might be consoled by finding another mate. This seemed

almost impossible, for the nesting season was in full swing, and no unmated hens remained. Still, faith can obtain anything; and she was full of confidence! The very next morning there appeared in the garden, and even perched upon the rose-arch, a tall, slim, strange thrush. Hydrangea stopped his crying and eyed her cautiously. He would never have tolerated a cock thrush in his own domain, so my mother knew it must be a hen, and that her prayer had, indeed, been answered! She felt sure that the strange thrush must be a beautiful young widow, whose mate had, perhaps, been overtaken by a fate like "Sarah Maria's."

Hydrangea left off his sorrowful cries; soon he began to *sing* . . . and before long he and the widow were busy about a nest!

It was the third year of the war that spring failed to bring Hydrangea, and my mother often wondered if he fell a victim to some deadly barrage, as he flew bravely across the war-zone on his way to Africa.

Another bird-friend of hers was "Billy" (his real name was "Jubilee," because he came to her in 1897). He was an extremely cheeky cock-sparrow. He, too, was in and out of the house, free but completely tame. He would

come to the table for meals, and was a regular member of the household at Hertford Heath. It seemed to amuse him to settle on the end of her bow and balance himself there as she played her violin.

There was a robin, too, named "Bobby" (in later days), who spent most of his time in her writing-room at Hertford Heath, and particularly liked sitting in a dwarf Japanese tree on her table. A bronze figure of Dante was also a favourite perch, and my mother would put little bits of cheese on Dante's knee for Bobby.

"Parson Fletcher" and his wife were a pair of black and white water-wagtails, who ran and strutted up and down and became very bold. One day they produced a large family of little Fletchers, of a beautiful pale grey, who became very tame, and were a great delight to my mother.

"Battems" was a very large bat which she heard squealing in the hands of a workman, and rescued from certain death. She became deeply attached to him, and he to her. He would fly round the room in the evening, but slept all day—his favourite place being inside her wardrobe, where he would hang himself

up, head-downwards, on a dark-coloured cloak. He knew my mother perfectly, and would love to nestle in her hand or hang himself on her clothes, though he struggled to get away if others tried to hold him, and even bit at times, with needle-like white teeth. I can remember well seeing Battems on the floor and my mother and several of her friends standing round. It was in the days when skirts reached practically to the ground. Battems would crawl round nosing the hem of each skirt. Only when he reached my mother's would he begin to climb up it. She fed him on raw kidney. Once he was lost for some time, and discovered under a large pile of music that had not been moved for a long time. It showed his wonderful strength, for he had evidently got there himself, and was quite flat. He soon woke up, however, and seemed to enjoy a meal of kidney!

But perhaps my mother's most marvellous accomplishment in the taming of wild things was her shoal of fish in a stream running into Derwent Water.

She often stayed at Keswick (for the Convention), and was fond of rowing across Derwent Water and up this little river. One day, having

moored the boat in a pool, she noticed a beautiful silver shoal of minnows—little fish about an inch and a half long—in the brown, sunlit waters. A great desire came over her to tame them, and she made up her mind to do it.

Sitting in her boat absolutely still, she held a long stick in the water with a piece of bread fastened on the end. After waiting patiently for a long time she was rewarded by seeing the minnows nibbling at it. Day after day she repeated the performance, always drawing in the stick a little nearer to the boat, and always whistling a certain little call over and over again.

At last she dispensed with the stick altogether, and held the bread in her hand, and still the minnows flocked round it for their daily meal. Then, one day, she put her hand into the water without any bread, and the minnows came and swam round her hand, in and out of her fingers, nibbling with gentle little lips—hundreds of them—and she knew she had won!

After that, any day she came to the pool and whistled and put her hand and arm into the water, in about three minutes the shoal would be round it. If other people put their hands

into the water, too, the shoal would dart away. If, however, my mother took the strange hand and held it under the water, introducing it to her fishes, they would gradually come back, and cluster round the strange hand in the same way; after a while even remaining round it though held the length of the boat away from hers.

The year after this taming of the fishes my mother again visited Keswick, and lost no time in rowing to the pool. Her friends smiled incredulously when she put her arm over the side of the boat and whistled the fish-whistle. But her faith in the fidelity of her little silver friends was rewarded—they had not forgotten, and soon were seething round her hand, their tiny tails fairly wagging with delight. That the fishes should have remembered for a whole year seems to many people quite incredible, but there are numbers of trustworthy witnesses who could vouch for it, for year after year the same thing happened, and my mother would take parties of her friends to be introduced to her minnows.

Even when she missed a year, and two passed by without a visit from her, still the fishes remembered. She must have become a *tradition*

in the pool, for after over twenty years it could scarcely have been the *same* little fishes which she had originally tamed! I myself went with her in 1915, and saw the minnows come back for the first time after her two years' absence, and was duly introduced to them, and experienced the strange sensation of hundreds of little fishes clustering round my hand, and swimming in and out of my fingers quite fearlessly. Nothing frightened them. If you held one for a moment in your closed fist he would wriggle out, swim round with a wag of his tail, and in again. Her last visit to the fishes was in 1919, when she introduced them to Miss Phyllis Lett.

If other people moored their boats in the pool and whistled all day, and even held bread in the water, the fishes would not come.

I like to think of this power of my mother's over birds and beasts as not mere physical magnetism but rather a spiritual power, like that of St. Francis of Assissi, or our English St. Guthlac, who also tamed *fishes* as well as birds and animals, and made the following beautiful reply to a friend who asked him "wherefore the wild birds so submissively sat upon him":

"Hast thou never learnt," said St. Guthlac,

" that he who hath led his life after God's will, the wild beasts and wild birds have become the more intimate with him? And the man who would pass his life apart from worldly men, to him the angels approach nearer."

That my mother herself believed it was largely a matter of the *mind* is evident from a passage in one of her books, where she makes one of her characters describe her method of taming birds:

" 'How on earth do you make all the birds so tame?'

" 'By keeping absolutely still, at first; never making a sudden movement when they begin to come near. By never failing or disappointing their eager little expectations. If they found seed in a certain place yesterday, they may be sure of it in the same place to-day. If a bath of refreshing water is on the lawn to-day, it will be pure and bright and freshly filled to-morrow. . . . Also, I think, continually, thoughts of love and sympathy and tenderness towards them. I try to understand their point of view—even a sparrow has a point of view! I try to make them feel that they need not be afraid of me, because I love them and want them. That, because not one of them is forgotten before God, therefore—little chirping eager sparrows though they are—not one of them

can be forgotten by me. They more than repay my love and care, when, having learned to believe in it, they come to me with trust and with confidence.' " *

But it was not only the wild things that became her friends, always there was some animal in whose affection and companionship she delighted. An account of my mother would be quite incomplete without a description of those friends whose dumb sympathy meant so much to her.

Of these "Bacco," a little monkey, stands out supremely. She bought him in 1893 when he was quite a baby—soft brown fur, fluffy grey chest, long tail, and wonderfully expressive brown eyes. She had been dangerously ill, and was still convalescent during Bacco's first year, so that he was her constant companion. He became passionately devoted to her, and was more like a child than an animal in his complete understanding of all that was said to him. He was like one of the family and came to meals, having his portion like everyone else, and his own little goblet, which he would raise to his mouth and drink from, very carefully. He

* *The Broken Halo.*

went everywhere with her, and showed an almost incredible intelligence. If she showed signs of grief or anxiety he would note it at once, and become full of sympathetic distress. Bacco lived five years, and was succeeded by Tamalaine, a chow.

"Tammy's" intense devotion to my mother was wonderful. He was fond of all the family, but it was nothing to his overwhelming and boisterous affection for her. To find her again, after only one day's separation, would send him almost mad with delight.

Peter, a little white poodle, was equally devoted. He figures in one of her books.

For some years a jackdaw was her chief pet, and his devotion, too, was most unusual. So was that of a quaint-looking tropical bird—a toucan —with a great green beak like a banana. She loved him dearly, and he was quite one of the family. His cage was always placed by her at meals, and he would be allowed out to sit on the back of a chair. Sometimes, however, Toucan got a panic, and would suddenly fly over the table with his big flapping wings. I remember him once alighting on the surloin of beef and surveying the table from this point of vantage! Once he put out both the lamps by

flapping over them, and left us all in darkness. His death was a very great grief to my mother.

At one time a collection of little foreign birds of various sorts was her delight. These used to fly at large about the drawing-room! A bowl would be placed in the middle of the room, in which the whole lot would have their baths, with much splashing and enjoyment. Every night great was the commotion when the family's combined efforts would be bent upon catching the birds and putting them back in their respective cages. This operation was known as a "chivvy," and the birds enjoyed it more than the family, I think, and would persistently evade being caught. One very favoured little bird—a tanager—of wonderful blue and green shining plumage, was exempt from being caged for the night. He would go to roost in a little plant of broom, and be carried up, nightly, to sleep in my mother's bedroom.

Some other rather unusual occupants of the drawing-room were three pairs of jerboas! Jerboas look like miniature kangaroos, about a foot high. These would play games of hide-and-seek with each other round sofas and arm-chairs, book-cases and piano. Once, however,

one of them hid himself rather too well—namely, in the inner regions of an American organ, and it was a matter of great difficulty to get him out. I remember my mother's amusement when, at family prayers one day, a jerboa, who had concealed himself in the part of the drawing-room behind the bench on which the household sat in a long row, emerged, suddenly, from beneath the petticoats of the astonished maids, and sat up on his little haunches, looking at them intelligently. A new housemaid was so much overcome that she got up and left the room.

Horses my mother loved, too, and she took great pleasure in driving. She would take an interest even in her cab-horse, in the days when one got about London in a hansom. She often spoke kindly to her cabby about his horse, as she thought this would encourage him to take a pride in it, groom and feed it well, and, perhaps, be kinder to it. She used to tell a little story of how this habit was once the cause of a rather amusing humiliation.

She had driven across London to Liverpool Street Station in a hansom drawn by a particularly well-groomed and brisk little animal. Thinking to encourage the cabby's evident care, she gave him a more than usually generous tip,

and, with one of her glowing smiles, remarked: "A nice little horse you've got, cabby!"

The cabby was very deaf and rather dense.

"*Eh?*" he said.

"A nice little horse you've got, cabby!" repeated my mother.

"*Eh?*" grunted the cabby, bending down from his high perch.

My mother had become conscious of a row of grinning porters, leaning against the station wall; nevertheless, she bravely made one more attempt.

"*A nice little horse you've got, cabby!*"

"*Wha-at?*" said the cabby.

Then a friendly porter came to the rescue.

"Noice little 'oss you've got, cabby!" he bawled.

"Oh!" said the cabby; and my mother fled in confusion.

My mother believed that in their own way animals have communion with God, their Creator. She was fond of quoting passages from Scripture in support of this; especially the following:

"Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.

"The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. . . .

"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

"So is the great and wide sea, wherein are all things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. . . .

"These wait upon thee; that thou mayest give them all their meat in due season.

"That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, and they are filled with good.

"Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

"Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth." *

One of her favourite texts in the whole Bible was the glad cry which excludes no living being: "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord!"

She loved the story of Balaam's ass, who saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way, whereas the prophet's dull sight saw nothing! In fact all the Biblical allusions to animals were of the greatest interest to her, from the serpent in the garden of Eden to Daniel's lions. She loved the little touch in the gospel story which shows

* Psalms, civ. 20–30.

Christ's consideration for live things; for when, in righteous indignation, He drove out the men who were profaning the Temple, we are told that "He overthrew the tables of the money-changers," but to those who sold doves He said, "Take these things hence."

She loved all the world because it was the work of the Divine Creator, and she loved animals especially, because she felt that, even more wonderfully than inanimate nature, they revealed the creative power of her God.

With Hydrangea

PORTRAIT, 1912

VII : SPIRITUAL WORK

ALL work was "spiritual work" to my mother simply because she did not divide up life into water-tight compartments, so to speak. Religion was not necessarily connected with churches, chapels, pious books, meetings, or formal religious exercises of any sort. And "spiritual life" was not connected only with what the world means by the word "religion."

Life, to her, was a joyful adventure made up of experiences, happy and sad, beautiful and unbeautiful, mostly enjoyable, sometimes hard to bear, tinged generally with humour, always with interest; an adventure where her fellow men were of great moment; where love, sympathy, service, friendship, were outstanding features. And this adventure, with all its vivid perceptions and experiences, had running through it, giving it its very *raison d'être*, a great, invisible, but dominant reality—spiritual life.

To her the things we *see* were only half of what *is*. Everything had a spiritual significance. Nothing that was, nothing that happened, was

unrelated to the things of the spirit. There was to her no such thing as chance. She was conscious of man's *free will*, and she realised that man's free will implies the deliberate choice of a rational soul, and cannot be separated from spiritual life, whatever the choice is concerned with. She was also conscious of Divine guidance, when a soul trusts.

Her mind was not of the type that feels much need of doctrinal statements and intellectual adjustments, but she had a simple and thoroughgoing *faith*, which nothing in the world could shake, in the central facts of Christianity, and in the Holy Spirit's working in the souls of men. She believed that only a life in union with God was a complete life, and that the future happiness of the soul depended on its having lived such a complete life in this world.

To this she added a very practical view of Christian love and the kind of life which should result from making it the rule and ideal of all conduct; and in the Bible—"the inspired word of God," as she loved to call it—she found her whole inspiration.

In short, she was as conscious of the life of her soul as she was of the life of her body; and equally was she conscious of the *souls* of her

fellow men. With her to be conscious was to be interested; to be interested was to care with a whole-hearted sympathy, with an intense desire to be of service.

Hence, it necessarily became to her a matter of the first moment to help her fellow men to realise what was, to her, so clear; to strive to awaken in them the faith which she believed to be God's most precious gift to her soul; to instruct them in the knowledge with which she believed the Holy Spirit of God had illuminated her mind, and according to which she ordered her life.

She chose, accordingly, chiefly those forms of work which were directly concerned with the spiritual life; but at the same time her dominant idea broke out in whatever she was doing. She never "dragged in" religion: it was there, the very foundation and inspiration of her actions, so that when it came up into view it was quite spontaneous.

So in her novels—religion is not dragged in, but the idea of spiritual life flows through them and every now and then gets expressed.

So in her friendships—and she had many in her life—her friend must share in her spiritual enthusiasm: it must necessarily be a friendship in God.

So in her enormous correspondence—the bulk of her letters were in reply to those who sought her sympathy with their souls.

She saw God in everything, and everything that was beautiful and good in itself was to her a gift of God. She loved to quote a remark of St. James—"Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of light."

But besides this general conception of all her work being in a sense spiritual work, she spent an enormous amount of time, and gave the very best of herself, to work directly in connection with religion.

Her Bible classes had been a special feature of her work at Hertford Heath from the earliest days, especially the Ladies' Bible Reading. The fame of this had spread abroad, and from time to time my mother would be asked to give courses of six or twelve in other parishes or even in London drawing-rooms. When staying in the south of France in 1903 she delivered addresses on the Bible, in French, which she spoke like a native. It was in 1901 that she undertook to give one of these courses in the parish of St. Mary's, Leyton. It was held in the parish hall, known as the Victoria Room, and was attended

by some seventy ladies. But this course did not come to an end with the number of Bible readings originally arranged for; it went on and on, enthusiasm increasing with every week's gathering. Ladies from the neighbouring parishes had begun attending—from Leytonstone, Walthamstow, and even from farther afield. Soon it had to be admitted that the Leyton Bible Reading, held on Friday afternoons, was a permanent institution.

My mother would prepare for it with the greatest care, and every Friday in the year (except during a few weeks in the holidays, when it was closed) would see her on the platform of the Victoria Room, open Bible in hand, full of joy and unflagging enthusiasm.

The Victoria Room would be completely packed every week, and when, in 1909, it was decided to pull down the Victoria Room and build a larger hall, the offer of the Wesleyan Lecture Hall, Leyton High Road, was gratefully accepted, and the Bible Reading re-opened there with the satisfactory sense that there was now plenty of room, and that people could be encouraged to join, and friends brought, without fear of being turned away through finding a room already full to overflowing.

The membership reached 500, and there were never less than 300 to 400 present every week, wet or fine.

The Bible Reading was exclusively for ladies, but on one day in the year the members were permitted to bring their husbands, sons and brothers—namely, on Good Friday. And so, every Good Friday afternoon the great hall, with its wide galleries, would be completely packed out with over 1000 people.

There was something quite unique about these weekly gatherings: it is difficult to give an adequate description of them.

It must be remembered that they went on for twenty years, with the original members as keen as ever, every year adding new members who became regular attenders. It must be realised that between my mother and those 500 ladies there existed a bond of the strongest devotion, a very large number being personally known to her and in correspondence with her, while with many she was still more intimately acquainted. The glowing enthusiasm of my mother for her religion must be taken into account, and the joy to her of this great gathering where she was free to conduct everything as she pleased, in her own unconventional, inspiring way. Her musical

powers must not be forgotten ; nor that she was a born orator. But above all her boundless faith in God, and desire to serve Him, and unswerving confidence that His Spirit was with her and working through her.

Long before the hour members would begin to arrive, many taking up their own particular seat, occupied by them year after year. By three o'clock the body of the hall would be full—a sea of expectant faces, an eager, *waiting* atmosphere pervading the place.

On the stroke of three my mother would enter, and walk with her buoyant step across the wide, high platform, a light of joy upon her face, the vision of Heaven in her eyes, and her beloved Bible in her hands. She would stand silent for a while, her eyes looking out over this gathering of her devoted, expectant friends. Then she would open the Bible Reading, sometimes with prayer, sometimes with a hymn.

A portion of Scripture would follow, given new meaning by the way she read it, the music of her voice, the emphasis, the pause, the sense of her adoring devotion for the Word of God.

Then would come a hymn—and with my mother a hymn was not a mere conventional matter of routine ; a hymn was primarily worship

of God, but also a means of expression for the human soul, and an awakener of the understanding and inspirer of the heart. She had, of course, trained her members to sing almost like a choir. To many beautiful hymns with inadequate tunes she had composed tunes; and so the hymns at these gatherings were an event in themselves.

After the hymn would follow an informal quarter of an hour in which my mother would give out notices, read aloud letters requesting prayer for special objects (both spiritual and temporal) or returning thanks for graces received. During this time she would have much of a friendly and personal sort to say to her members. They were truly her friends, and she shared with them her every joy and sorrow, success and anxiety. They knew all about each of her eight children and all their doings. Everything of interest she would share with them, knowing she had their heart's sympathy and could depend on their prayers. Many amusing little stories she would tell them, and have the room joining with her in happy laughter, her own vitality and joy in life seeming to give new life to all.

Then another hymn, followed immediately by the body of the Bible Reading—a quite unique

form of address, delivered almost in oratorical style, and yet part teaching and part devotional appeal. The subject would generally be part of a course of Bible Readings on some particular subject, worked out with infinite care and wonderful ingenuity, and innumerable references both to the Old and New Testaments (each reference being looked up by the members in their Bibles, while my mother read aloud the verse).

Sometimes it would be a book of the Old Testament that was being studied (always finding its meaning and full significance by reference to the New). Sometimes a spiritual idea, worked out in type and prophecy, shown as running through the inspired books of the Old Testament and explained, at last, in its full meaning by Christ or St. Paul or one of the other Apostles. For three-quarters of an hour my mother would speak, throwing her whole heart into it, carrying all with her in her unbounded enthusiasm for the things of God.

Then a last hymn and final prayer, and the Bible Reading would be over.

Now would commence a time of hand-clasping, brief but intimate conversations, expressions of thanks, words of encouragement, and always my

mother's radiant smile and sense of loving sympathy extended to each individual as much as to all collectively.

At last they would disperse to their scattered homes—people of many dominations, of varying stations in life, but strangely one in this discipleship of one whose sole claim was that she was a disciple of the Divine Master.

How much the Bible Readings meant to her, personally, is apparent from the first part of the following letter to her members, written from Grindelwald in 1905:

" . . . As I take up my pen, to-day, my mind goes back to last Friday. Do you know, I had a real hard time of it! I had no idea how it would feel to know the Bible Reading was going on, *and not be there*. I kept looking at the time! As the hour drew near I could not cease praying about it, although I had to be out on the skating-rink part of the time. I could picture you all arriving, and the seats filling up. At last it was 3.30 (by English time) and I went in, to be quietly *with you* in spirit and to meet with you before the Throne of God. My friends, it was so strange to be so far away in body and so very near in spirit. I could almost see you all assembled; and I found I knew exactly where to look for each dear, familiar face as it came into my mind. You know, you *do* have your own

'sittings' and keep to them! I am always glad of it. I like to know, in a moment, where to find a face I want, for a special look or a quick response to a thought. . . .

"Now you will like to know something of our doings here. I wish I could make you all see something of the wonderful beauties of this place covered with its robe of spotless white, deep and silent and exquisitely pure—but crisp under foot, and glistening like countless diamonds in the sunshine; reminding one of the appearance of those travel-stained earthly garments when a foretaste of His glory came to the dear Master as He prayed, and we read, 'His raiment became shining exceeding white, as snow,' and 'His raiment was white and glistening.' Then the grand snow mountains stand all around, like silent sentinels, lifting their great rocky heads against the bright blue sky. And the intense cold is never trying, because of the perfect stillness and dryness of the atmosphere. The air is so rare and invigorating it seems fully worth while to do deep breathing here. Everyone is full of energy and life, and outdoor sports go on all day—skating, tobogganing, *ski-ing*.

"How it would have amused you to see us the other day on Norwegian *skis* for the first time, flying down the slopes and going headlong into the deep snow, or sitting down suddenly and disappearing (for at first one can only stop by tumbling down). But the more you fall the less you mind falling—though it is sometimes a little

difficult to get up, when you find yourself on your back in deep snow, with flat wooden *skis*, *seven feet long*, strapped firmly on your feet! But I must not tell you any more of these sort of doings or you will begin to think there is little prospect of my coming back to you *whole* on Friday week.

"And now may I use my last two pages to give you a thought that has grown so precious to me during these days here? You remember how in the 125th Psalm we find these words: 'As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even for ever.' I know of no place to which this verse so perfectly applies as to Grindelwald, for the mountains are literally right round us, and the little village of Grindelwald lies in the deep, still valley, so safe and peaceful, shielded from wind and tempest. '*So* the Lord is round about His people.'

"I pondered over that little word '*so*,' and asked, '*How?*' 1st. *In perfect strength.* Nothing can move these mountains, nothing can shake them, they stand in their towering majesty, sublime emblems of the almighty strength of our Jehovah. 2nd. *They are always there*—not only when *we* happen to look out of the window and see them! When we forget them they are still there. When we are indoors, busy over little, trivial things, the grand mountains are still 'round about' us; we have but to go to the window *and look up*, and we shall see that this is so. *Thus* is the Lord round about His people *for ever*. Let us cultivate the habit of going

quickly to the window and looking up; often *verify the fact* that the Lord is round about you. When worry and anxiety come, say: 'Lord, Thou art round about me in Thy changeless strength. Keep me restful.' When trouble comes, casting its dark shadow over your sunny valley: 'Lord, Thy Love is all around me; this could only come to me through Thy dear will. I lean on Thee, and bear it.' How much secret sorrow we all have to bear through earthly props in some way failing! Remember, He *never* fails; He is always there; always strong, always changelessly faithful; always round about you.

"Did you notice this expression in one of the Psalms last Sunday morning, in church: 'Have I not remembered Thee in my bed; and thought upon Thee *when I was waking*'? My window looks out upon the Wetterhorn. I always sleep with my blind up, and my bed faces the window. When I wake each morning, the first thing I see in the early dawn light, is the grand old Wetterhorn standing firm, as it has stood all night, while we in the valley slept. And now its snowy peaks catch the morning light, and I see them gleam and glisten against the rosy sky.

"Oh to begin each day with the absolute assurance that the Lord is round about us!"

My mother's striking personality had, undoubtedly, much to do with the life and success of these very unusual gatherings, but to her there was nothing (consciously) of *self* about it. She

expressed her attitude of mind with regard to this point very beautifully in a letter written to her members, from America, where she was lecturing on "Palestine and the Bible" to vast Chautauqua audiences.

"I feel more and more," she writes (after weeks of unprecedented success, and the applause of audiences of 5000 people), "how little the personality of the messenger need matter, or be considered of much account, so long as the message goes home and does its work. 'Then said they unto him *: Who art thou? He said: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord.' If you were holding up a beautiful, life-size picture of the Christ before a large audience, as you raised it you yourself would be hidden from view; the higher you lifted it, the more completely you would be hidden; the more they saw of the Divine Face and Form, the less they would see of you. 'Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.'"

She had the gift of speaking, the power of holding her audience in absorbed attention, of swaying it as she would, to tears or laughter or high resolve. There are few gifts more likely to excite the elated sense of personal power, the

* John the Baptist.

desire to feel a crowd held in control, to experience the mastery of the mind over other minds. But my mother never allowed it to carry her away thus. Always her supreme effort was to subject her own power to the Divine Power of which she felt she was the instrument. How this idea dominated her mind is again shown in a letter from America to her members.

Her success with the vast American audiences had been great; she had seemed to be speaking with an ease of eloquence, a fund of power that carried all hearts with her into a genuine interest in her subject. And yet this is how she writes at the end of those eventful three weeks:

"And now, my friends, I am anxious to give you a final word about this time in America, and to tell you what I really feel about the Chautauqua work. It has been a deeply interesting experience, fraught with much which was expanding to one's ideas, and enriching to one's mental development. At the same time I cannot say that I want to take up Chautauqua work again. And you must not think from that that it has been a disappointment as regards the externals. The great audiences were all one could wish in the way of kind attention. But—

"Let me try and explain, very simply. On Monday, the 6th, Labour Day, I visited Hope

Hall, with Mrs. Booth. We held a meeting for the men in the afternoon. A large number were present. Mrs. Booth asked me to give them a Bible Reading. For the first time since leaving England I stood up, with my Bible in my hand, to read from its inspired pages, and deliver God's message to waiting hearts. And, oh, my friends, the difference between *that* and Chautauqua lecturing! It is all the difference between walking heavily along the ground, or soaring on eagle's wings to the sky. The one is a carefully worked out production of one's own unaided endeavour. The other is the direct message given by the Living Spirit of God, delivered in His power, and accompanied by His individual and collective working. I shall never forget the marvellous joy of realising the difference. Having come through a course of the speaking without the Power has made so much more real the gift of Himself in the ministry of the Word.

"Meanwhile I pray God that in the great Testing Day the other work may prove to have been not altogether barren and unfruitful; and that, amid much which was undoubtedly wood, hay and stubble, some gold, silver and precious stones may be found, to stand the fire and shine to His glory."

Such were her quite genuine sentiments—for my mother never said what she did not mean. Hence it is not surprising to find that she very

rarely spoke on public platforms save directly on religion. Once "The Rosary" had brought her name prominently before the public she would have been a welcome speaker anywhere, and her versatile mind would easily have grasped enough of any popular subject to enable her to speak very persuasively upon it. But she refused all invitations, save those from religious organisations.

Of the latter she had a great many during some six or seven years after the publication of "The Rosary," and until her health obliged her to cut down work. The societies for which she most enjoyed speaking were the Bible Society and the Bible League, and she travelled a great deal on their behalf. Wherever her name was advertised the hall would be packed with people who had no interest in the Bible Society, but wanted to hear the author of the books they loved. She was pleased, of course, to see these crowds of eager readers, but she always confined herself completely to her subject, and was altogether the Christian teacher and not at all the novelist on such occasions. The subject on which she generally spoke at these meetings was "The Inspiration of the Bible." In 1913 she packed the great Free Trade Hall at Manchester, and spoke to an enthusiastic audience of 3500. She

was fond of picturesque and telling illustrations, and one that she loved to use was that of a wonderful little jewelled box which she had bought in Italy. On a spring being touched the lid would fly open and a tiny bird, hardly an inch high, would spring up and pour forth a flute-like song. Having described her treasure and pointed out his lesson, she would then produce it, and, holding it up in view of the audience, make the little bird perform. He had delighted Leyton, of course, and many of her smaller meetings, but, with great boldness, she determined to make her little bird preach his eloquent sermon to that vast crowd at Manchester. The meeting held its breath and listened. She touched the spring, the little bird sprang up, and his clear notes penetrated to the farthest corner of the hall! At the end of the meeting a clergyman came up and said that he had been at the farthest extremity of the gallery, right back against the wall, and had heard every note of the little bird's song and every word of her address And one may be sure that the lesson of the little bird stuck in the minds of those present—namely, that there are people very much like him, ready to stand up in the pew on Sunday and sing a hymn right through, but with Monday morning down goes the lid—they are shut into

the prison of worldliness, self-seeking, money-making; and like the little bird, they lack, without knowing it, *life*, *light* and *liberty*.

She often spoke in London—in the Queen's Hall, once, for the Religious Tract Society, and in Spurgeon's Tabernacle—but her journeys were far and wide. To Edinburgh she went on one of these flying visits; to Cardiff, and even over to Ireland. Her Irish trip was characteristic in that she crammed as much as possible into a very short time. Leaving London on Tuesday morning, and arriving back on Saturday, she visited Dublin, Belfast and Cork, speaking to a large gathering at each place.

She visited Birmingham several times, speaking once at the Digbeth Institute, and once at the Boots' Institute. On the former occasion the *Birmingham Daily Mail* had a column on "The Author of 'The Rosary' visits Birmingham," but in the course of the article the writer had to admit:

"Her first visit to Birmingham was made under circumstances which would hardly remind one best of her literary fame, since it was the anniversary of the Digbeth Institute she came to attend. It was a Digbeth audience, too. . . . There were old ladies in aprons and little black

bonnets, old people with tired eyes and worn finger-tips. There were young men and their lassies; stout, middle-aged, middle-class citizens with their wives, and all the queer flotsam and jetsam of humanity that floats upon the currents of districts like Digbeth. Not in the least an audience to which a great literary reputation would make any appeal; yet Mrs. Barclay held the audience for something over three-quarters of an hour, last night, with an address which was mainly religious in character.

"It was a personal triumph, not at all a literary triumph. It was the triumph of the woman and not of the writer. Except for a smiling remark that she hoped her audience would agree that 'a little fiction, in moderation, was a good thing, sometimes,' one would not have guessed she was a novelist at all."

She could easily have obtained a welcome in any of these big towns under very different circumstances, and been duly "lionised." But she preferred to come to the simple and unliterary, and in the name of Christ.

My mother never wrote magazine stories or articles, though many editors plied her for such. But when she was pressed for a contribution of a religious character she found it hard to refuse, and many quite secular papers published a spiritual "message" to their readers from "the author

of 'The Rosary.'" For instance, the *Daily News* for January 1913 published "A New Year's Message to Women," which was purely and simply a sermon on the woman of Samaria's famous conversation with Christ at the well. She contributed to the *Quiver*, *The Teacher's World*, *The Woman's Magazine*, and similar periodicals, but always her articles were religious, and I suppose they may be considered a real part of her spiritual work.

In 1905 she published a very striking little booklet called "A Notable Prisoner." Its subject was the Passion of Christ from the point of view of Barabbas. It gave scope for her sympathetic imagination and dramatic power, and she describes vividly the terror of the man as he hears the crowd shout first his name and then the words, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" In 1914 she published a small volume on prayer—"The Golden Censer."

Someone once asked my mother if she would ever take to writing poetry.

"Not while I can write prose," she laughingly replied; and yet, when she wanted some verses to give her Leyton Bible Reading members as a New Year's motto, she composed some of a beautiful simplicity, and had them printed in her

favourite purple and gold, on her cards of greeting. That for 1910 was as follows:

"Dear Christ, move on before!
Ah, let me follow where Thy feet have trod;
Then shall I keep, 'mid life's perplexities,
The Golden Pathway of the Will of God."

The year after, she wrote the following for them:

"My Lord, come home with me!
Come, through the turmoil of the busy street,
Where none can see the shining of Thy face,
Where none can hear the moving of Thy feet;
Yet come, dear Master, to the humble place
Where love hath raised a royal throne for Thee:
My Lord, come home with me!

"My Lord, come home with me!
And, when the noisy rush of life is o'er,
When all the things of life have ceased to be,
When swiftly passing years come round no more,
And the eternal dawn breaks o'er the golden sea;
Then, for the sake of Thy great love to me,
Let me—come home—with Thee."

VIII: A TOUR IN AMERICA

IT was in 1909 that my mother first visited the United States. Her younger sister, to whom she was deeply attached, had married Mr. Ballington Booth, the son of the great "General" Booth, and after some years of active work with the Salvation Army, both in England and in America, had severed her connection with that movement and founded the Volunteers of America, later on developing with enormous success her great work among the prisons. It was in order to accompany her sister on a Chautauqua tour that my mother crossed the Atlantic.

America moved her to a wondering admiration; Americans charmed her.

"This is a land of extremes," she wrote, "everything is on an exaggerated scale—exaggerated in the sense of being so far larger than our ideas or expectations. . . . Everything runs to extremes. It is in the climate; it is in the character; it is even in nature. American robins are the size of thrushes; and each spring I have to send out marrow seeds from England for my sister's garden, because an English

vegetable marrow in its second year out here becomes a pumpkin!

"Living in the midst of this largeness of fact and conception has a decided influence upon the mind. It widens out one's ideas and expectations. It tends to make one say: 'Why not a thousand?' where before one was content with a hundred. This is well—up to a certain point; providing we keep clear of the pumpkin growth, and do not make for *quantity* at the expense of *quality*."

The "great things of America," as she called them, delighted her—whether those of man's creation or God's, whether in the form of a "sky-scraper" or the Falls of Niagara. She used to describe with great enjoyment her visit to the Singer Building, consisting of forty-seven stories, and standing 762 feet high. It appealed to her to get into a lift ("elevator" as they would say) and remark, "Put me out at the 38th, please." While the experience of coming down from the top by "express" was somewhat startling. She realised the immense height as she looked down from the top upon New York City, and saw the spire of Trinity Church far below! She often used the high buildings of America as an illustration in giving spiritual addresses: the *rock-foundation* of the

city making it possible to build high up into the sky.

She was never tired of describing Niagara—its overwhelming power, its tremendous beauty, its "mighty onwardness"; or "the blinding, breathless, deafening experience" of passing through the Cave of the Winds, until shelter is reached, at last, in the cleft of the Rock of Ages.

Another thing she considered one of the great things of America was "the *great* interest everybody takes in everybody else." She had always regretted the chill aloofness, the awkward shyness between strangers in England, and the conventionality often found in English society. The real friendliness of Americans delighted her. It seemed to her that people introduced to each other at social functions, for instance, meant literally what they so often said in place of our English "How d'you do?"—"Delighted to make your acquaintance." They seemed to her to enter with real interest into the business of getting to know one another, asking questions, and thereby soon discovering a topic of mutual interest.

At first there was something just a little disconcerting about the simplicity and lack

of conventionality in some of these opening remarks. It seemed strange, for instance, when she and her sister were introduced to an old gentleman to be greeted by the ejaculation, "Well, you *are* alike! Now which is the oldest?"

My mother liked the way perfect strangers took interest in each other, so ready to be enthusiastic over another's concerns. She was much amused when an old lady came up and inquired, "Are you a poet?" On receiving a reply in the negative, the old lady explained naïvely that it was the way my mother's hair grew that had led her to think it might be so!

She liked the gardens of their summer residences, sloping right down to the roads, with no fence or wall or hedge to make for a selfish privacy, and shut out the passer-by, with his interested and appreciative glance, cheered on his weary way by the sight of flowers, and a cool verandah, with pretty women in white frocks drinking iced water.

Her impressions of a baseball match are worth quoting:

". . . . I was taken out to the polo ground to see a baseball match between New York

and Chicago—otherwise the 'Giants' and the 'Cubs,' champion players of the world. . . . There I saw the biggest crowd I have ever seen in my life. The polo ground *seats* 35,000 people, and at these big games the stands are packed.

"Cricket and baseball, the national games of England and America, exemplify in a remarkable manner the individual characteristics of the two great nations. An American crowd cannot enjoy itself while watching a game unless it is given cause to leap to its feet and yell every two and a half minutes! (You should have heard us yesterday!) An American crowd likes to feel free to 'rattle the pitcher' at a critical moment when the whole game depends on his next throw of the ball, by drumming with its feet upon the wooden floor of the stands, so that a noise like thunder rolls around the ground. When thirty-four thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine people (I refrained!) stamp their feet and groan, it requires nerve to pitch straight."

Comparing baseball with cricket, she remarks:

"An American crowd would delight in watching a batsman who hit out freely and scored rapidly. But they would never sit patiently on while a batsman kept up his wicket for hours without adding materially to the score; or while an eleven who could not secure victory carefully

played out time. These perfectly legitimate though wearisome tactics have no place in baseball, nor could they happen in America."

The difference between cricket and baseball "resolves itself," she says, "into a psychological problem. The distinctive differences in the game are but a clear-cut, vivid exposition of the remarkable differences in the spirit, the mind, the essential character of the two races."

"The Rosary" had not yet been published; it was not as a writer, therefore, that America welcomed my mother on this occasion but as a public speaker. She had accepted an engagement as a lecturer and was to accompany her sister on a tour, addressing the vast Chautauqua gatherings—an institution peculiar to America.

Mrs. Booth was to lecture on her prison work, and my mother undertook to speak on "Palestine and the Bible."

It was, I suppose, a unique experience for an English woman—this tremendous journey through twelve States, a distance of 7000 miles in three weeks, with audiences of anything from 2000 to 5000 (and one occasion, 8000) keen-minded Americans to be kept interested for an hour and a half at each place!

The fact that the tour took place before the

publication of her novels had given the public an interest in my mother, meant that the attention of her audience depended entirely upon the intrinsic interest of her lecture and her own power as a speaker. Fortunately I am able to give the story of this tour in her own words, for she wrote a long letter every week to the members of the Leyton Bible Reading, to be published in the *Leyton District Times*. That her thoughtful affection for her Leyton friends led her to do this is very fortunate, for she was not the sort to keep a diary of her own doings, and her letters home were always of a more intimate nature, so that the history of that tour might otherwise never have been fully known. She does not tell, of course, of her quite extraordinary success in holding those vast crowds, and of the enthusiastic appreciation they showed, but of this we learnt from her sister.

These letters give a real impression of the personality I am trying to show forth in this book—her enthusiasm and enjoyment of life, her courage and endurance, her sense of humour and appreciation of detail, the way spiritual ideas dominated her mind.

It may be asked, What *is* a "Chautauqua"? The name is really that of a town in New York

State where the gatherings originated. The idea is this. Near the principal (or most central town) of a State is erected an enormous tent, or a wooden building, seated to hold anything from 2000 to 5000 people. During eight or ten days in the summer an intellectual programme is arranged, chiefly literary, but also including music, dramatic impersonations, and like attractions; well-known American writers, actors, speakers, and musicians being secured at large fees. People come in from many miles round, and camp in tents near the great centre, attending the lectures and entertainments every afternoon and evening. I have before me the elaborate eight-page illustrated programme of the Fifth Annual Assembly of the Coshocton Chautauqua. It is written in the enterprising Yank style, opening with the statement, "This year we have the strongest program ever presented here. Our talent alone this year costs us $1655.00."; and ending with the business-like bit of advice, "The grove will be filled with tents, this year, and all your friends will be there. Bring your tent or rent one and join the tenters, for they are the people who get the most for their money." But I feel that by quoting the pages on my mother

and her sister I can best give an idea of the kind of expectations they had to live up to.

Beneath my aunt's photograph is the following :

"MAUD BALLINGTON BOOTH

Will appear this year for the first time in Coshocton. We have followed the scriptural rule and kept the best of the feast to the last. We have planned to make our last day the best." [The previous description of various poets, orators, and musicians had been superlatively glowing, so this was high praise!] "Just think of it! Mrs. Booth in the afternoon; Mrs. Barclay in the evening; and The Chicago Glee Club at both entertainments. As the boys say, 'That's going some.'

"Mrs. Booth hardly needs an introduction to an American audience as she is known and loved far and wide as 'the little mother of the prisons.' She is delightfully quiet and undemonstrative on the platform. One could hardly be restless who simply watched, even without understanding a word. Her face, her manner, her sentiments are all the inspiration of earnestness, but there is no surfeit, for pathos and humour, comedy and tragedy, drift absolutely side by side from the same silver stream. You laugh with tears in your eyes. Her message is one worth hearing, and one you will never forget, for with beautiful words, in telling touches, she paints a picture in a paragraph

that preaches a sermon and tells a tale that fastens itself indelibly. Her voice is such that every word can be heard in any part of the auditorium without effort on the part of the hearer.

"MRS. BARCLAY

Is the sister of Mrs. Ballington Booth. All who have heard her realise that she is a very remarkable speaker. From her earliest girlhood she has been gifted in this manner.

"Her travels are of great interest, and the way in which she tells the story and delivers the deeper message that it is to teach, can but leave a lasting impression. Both Mrs. Barclay and Mrs. Ballington Booth come of a family of writers. She was introduced to the American reading public by a striking little book entitled 'The Wheels of Time.' A work of greater importance which bids fair to make a sensation is to be published this year, entitled 'The Rosary.'" [A brief biographical outline follows.]

The places and dates of the Chautauqua gatherings for this tour were as follows: Storm Lake, Iowa, July 23; Hiawatha, July 25; Leavenworth, Kansas, 26th; New Albany, Indiana, 30th; Cawker City, Kans., August 1; Hastings, Nebraska, 6th; Iowa City, 7th; Coshocton, Ohio, 8th; Chautauqua, New York, 10th.

Emberson

AT THE TIME "THE ROSARY" WAS WRITTEN, 1905.

Lafayette

PORTRAIT, 1913.

The following is the story of this remarkable trip in my mother's own words:

"BLUE POINT, LONG ISLAND, U.S.A.,
"July 19, 1919.

"To-day we start for the far West, leaving New York this evening for Chicago, en route to Storm Lake, Iowa—our first Chautauqua centre. We speak there on Friday, the 23rd, but are planning to arrive on Thursday, so as to see something of the place and people before our own turn comes. We spend twenty-four hours in Chicago. It gives one some idea of this country to realise that we must travel nearly 2000 miles to reach our first gathering; and, in one case, 2000 miles from one centre to another.

"I know a good deal more about Chautauqua gatherings than I did when I left England. I shall not be sorry when I am safely through my first! Our success depends entirely—and *literally*—upon whether we can *hold* our audience. In England if an audience is bored it looks at its watch. A Chautauqua audience *gets up and walks out!* The English method is discouraging to a speaker, but the Chautauqua plan would be altogether collapsing."

My mother herself witnessed an unfortunate speaker treated thus at one centre. Literally the whole vast audience filed out, leaving a

mere handful in the first few rows to listen, while he struggled to finish out his time!

"On the other hand, if we do succeed in gaining their interest and attention, Chautauqua audiences are most appreciative and enthusiastic. Many will have driven, ridden, or motored forty miles in order to be present. Some of the centres are at little 'one-horse towns,' as they call them here, of only eight or nine hundred inhabitants—and yet, on the Chautauqua grounds, four thousand people will await us. They pour in from all the country round. Many bring tents and make a large camp for the whole session. Others drive in each day from outlying villages, isolated farms, or distant homesteads. To many of them in the Western States it is the one intellectual treat of the year. It will have to furnish topics for fireside conversation during long, dull winter evenings. In one place, where the attenders were largely farmers and their families, the Chautauqua dates had to be fixed to suit 'the huckleberry crops, and the moon.'

"We have just received the programme from Hiawatha, and it fills me with glad and earnest expectation; for we are to be there on the last day, and mine is the closing address of the whole Chautauqua. It is Sunday, the 25th. My sister speaks in the afternoon. Then there is a sacred orchestral concert, early in the evening; my address follows, and immediately

after it on the programme comes 'Benediction.' That Sunday evening seems to me to hold such possibilities of working out the subject very fully on really spiritual lines, in such a way that true 'benediction' may follow. Ah, if that great throng could disperse carrying the Holy Land in their hearts. For is not the Holy Land the land where Christ dwelt, and through which His blessed footsteps moved; and has He not said of consecrated hearts: 'I will dwell in them, and walk in them'? We may all have our Jerusalem of worship, our Tabor of transfiguration, our Bethany of communion, and our Galilee of calm in that temple of the inner being, where His promised Presence doth abide."

"STORM LAKE, IOWA,
"July 23rd.

"Our first Chautauqua is over, and all is well.

"I wish you could all have heard Mrs. Ballington Booth's magnificent lecture in the afternoon, entitled 'Lights and Shadows of Prison Life.' She held that great audience, without the smallest strain or effort, for over an hour and a half; often moving them to tears by the pathos of the tales she had to tell.

"In the evening, as we walked from our rooms to the Chautauqua grounds, the lake gleamed golden in the setting sun. The sky was clearest blue, flecked with white fleecy clouds. A soft breeze blew across the lake. It was a perfect evening.

"My lecture was on from eight o'clock to half-past nine. (You see, they expect full measure in America.)

"When preliminaries were over and I found myself at last standing forward alone in the centre of the high stage, with a row of footlights just in front; and, beyond, tiers upon tiers of seats, raised one above the other, and sloping upwards right to the back of that vast auditorium, I should have been glad to have had a good supply of the dear, expectant, encouraging faces of my Leyton friends packed into the middle of that big crowd! . . . Well, I think I ought to tell you that—even without this reinforcement of L.B.R. members—I found a very kindly, attentive and appreciative audience.

"I did not give quite the whole of my lecture, but I do not expect to do that at any one place. I have it arranged in sections, so as to be able to decide in a moment which to omit and what to put in. Thus I have sufficient material to be able to lecture twice in the same centre, in case I should have to fill my sister's place; and she, of course, could fill mine many times over, with her wonderful prison stories.

"In a future letter I must describe to you more fully the very remarkable Chautauqua scenes and surroundings; the hundreds of tents on the great camping ground, beautifully fitted up, many of them accommodating parties of six or eight; the constant stream of motor cars at lecture hours, racing in from all the country

round, followed by all kinds of queer vehicles on wheels—surries, buggies, sulkies, runabouts, buckboards, and others the names of which I have never heard. No hats are worn; and most of the women look very fresh and charming, dressed entirely in white. There is a large proportion of men in the audiences, and a good many children; also a few dogs—the latter *very* well behaved!"

My mother's next letter described her lecture at Hiawatha—satisfactory, to her, because of its more spiritual tone. The audience was a most responsive one, "readily laughing, applauding or hushing to silence." At the conclusion

"there commenced for us a strenuous fifteen minutes of handshaking; for when a Westerner 'starts in' to shake your hand, he keeps on at it, and he fairly shakes *you*, not merely your hand! There were fine old farmers there, wealthy yet simple-hearted, owning thousands of acres of pasture land, and fields of beautiful tasselled corn (maize); but keen to keep in touch with things intellectual in all moments they could spare from their labour on the soil. There were others who pressed forward eagerly, saying, with a catch in the voice: 'I am from the old country. I have an old father and mother over there, now.'—'I am from Wales: have you been there?'—'Oh, *do* shake hands with me! What it is to hear an English voice speak English!

There's a little village over there—it's forty years since I saw it; but—it's my home.' Ah, England, England! A little island and far away! but always the Mother Country; and always holding the hearts of her children.

"And all these introductions and hand-shakings were an unmixed joy; because all minds seemed lifted above personalities. The remarks were all of blessing received; of new lights given; or illumination of long-loved Bible passages. Even should every other Chautauqua prove disappointing, I should feel this gathering at Hiawatha fully worth the long journey."

"UNION TERMINAL, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI,
"July 28th.

"I find my only possible time for concluding this letter is in a railway station, while waiting to enter our Pullman car for another long night journey. This will be our third consecutive night on the trains. I am beginning to look forward with longing to the treat of a night passed beneath a roof. We hope for this at New Albany, to-morrow.

"We have spent our days at three of the largest prisons in America—Leavenworth, Fort Madison and Chester.

"At Leavenworth the Governor took me all over the prison; and we spent some time in the department where all the records of criminals are kept; where the convicts are measured

and photographed; and where their thumb and finger prints are taken. Mine were done by an expert who had been over to study the system at Scotland Yard, where it originated. Both my hands were duly imprinted on a State prison form, classified, and all particulars entered; and then the warden said: 'Now, if you are in a train wreck, and the cars catch fire—as they mostly do—and the whole of you is burnt but your hands, we could identify you without the possibility of a mistake.' No doubt this was extremely satisfactory, from one point of view; but it was not exactly reassuring in the midst of our constant railway journeys! I would sooner be kept out of 'wrecks' by the loving prayers at home than identified by my charred thumbs through the ingenuity of the State prison system!"

"NEW ALBANY, INDIANA,
"July 29th.

"At last we find ourselves quartered in a comfortable Western house, with the delightful prospect of a twenty-four hours' rest before our Chautauqua engagements, here, to-morrow afternoon and evening. It will be a large gathering. The tent is seated to hold 5000 people.

"We are close to the celebrated 'cabbage patch' at Louisville, and I hope to go and see it to-morrow, and call on Mrs. Wiggs. Only it has to be done tactfully; for dear, simple-

minded Mrs. Wiggs is not pleased with her notoriety, and took the broom to her last visitor, calling upon Billy Wiggs to supplement it with a pail of water!" *

My mother's next letter was dated "Top of Pike's Peak, Colorado, August 4th." It was characteristic of her to have begun her letter there for the pleasure of writing to her friends at the height of 14,147 feet above sea-level (10,557 feet higher than Snowdon, as she explained). The extraordinary view delighted her, for Pike's Peak rises sheer up from the prairie. She was alone on this expedition.

"I was given a formidable list of symptoms and queer sensations which I must expect to experience. But all I feel is an extra sense of vigour and well-being. I saw several people, however, reel as they left the car; and one poor lady collapsed at once upon a stone, and sits there gasping, and waiting to take the first possible train down again.

"Nothing will induce her to move; though I comforted her somewhat by feeling her pulse, and explaining to her the effect the altitude was having upon it, and why.

* My mother had delighted in the popular little book, *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch.*

"When we were half-way up, at one of the stopping places for watering the engine, a man suddenly appeared from nowhere, sprang upon the car, handed me a slip of paper and a pencil, and asked me to write my name and address. He was obviously a 'newspaper man,' and I complied at once, feeling grateful to him for not also demanding my impressions of Pike's Peak, the prairie, America, and the world in general! The brave little panting engine began to puff off again; the 'newspaper man' sprang off on to the rocky track and vanished as suddenly as he had appeared, in the direction of a little wooden hut near the telegraph wires. Half an hour later I purchased a copy of the *Pike's Peak Daily News*—which calls itself the most *elevated* paper in the world—and found, amongst other items, that I had arrived on the summit of Pike's Peak!

"There is a small hotel up here, where it is possible to pass the night, and see the sun rise. I should be greatly tempted to do this, if time permitted."

At the end of this letter, dated from Colorado Springs, my mother gives some idea of their strenuous travelling.

". . . The connections are terrible work sometimes. The other day the train in which we were to have left Cawker was wrecked, just before reaching the depôt. We waited

five hours, and finally left on a cattle train, and made our connection on the Rock Island Flyer, by two minutes! And on our way to Cawker our engine broke down; and we had to do thirty miles across country in an automobile, to get there at all. . . . At Kansas City, at 9 o'clock at night, with a journey before us as far as from London to Aberdeen, and our connection missed, I heard Mrs. Booth planning to rush seventy miles on a 'wild cat engine,' and catch up with our train at a junction, turning to say to me reassuringly, 'We should be *quite* comfortable sitting on our suit-cases'! However, the railway officials, when they grasped the situation, found another way. Notwithstanding all those vicissitudes, we have not yet had to fail an audience. Somehow or other we always get there."

"On the Rock Island Railway to Iowa,
"August 6th.

"I am having such a wonderful journey across the prairie. We passed over it by night before. Now it is a radiant afternoon. The sun is inclining to the west. Hundreds and hundreds of miles of golden prairie stretch away on every side as far as the eye can see. It seems so incongruous to be crossing it in a Pullman car. One ought to be mounted on a prairie pony, and galloping into the sunset!

"I have just been watching the pretty little prairie dogs, whisking in and out of their holes, or sitting up demurely on their hind legs to

watch the train go by. They remind me of my Egyptian jerboas, and are about the same size and colour.

"I must not close this letter without giving you some Chautauqua news. We had a very good time at New Albany. The tent seated 5000 people. Mrs. Booth rose to the occasion! Her lecture was magnificent.

"At Cawker City our day was Sunday. The tent there seated 3000. It was quite the most beautiful camping ground we have yet visited, amid fine trees and well watered by streams. A thousand people were camped there. My lecture was from 8.30 to 10 P.M. I shall never forget the scene. The platform brilliantly lighted by electric lights; the great tent crammed with people. Outside—moonlight, oak trees, countless tiny tents hung with lanterns, groups of men and boys lying around on the grass hoping to hear something without coming under the canvas. It was a very still night; during my lecture the only disturbing sound was made by the locusts in the surrounding trees, rubbing their wing-cases together. A huge cockchafer, attracted by the footlights, whirled in from the side, made a dash at my head, struck the Medici collar of my gown with a thud, and plunged down the back of my neck, kicking wildly. I fished him up, flung him away with a sweep of the arm, which to the audience appeared to be merely an oratorical gesture, and concluded my sentence!"

My mother's next letter was dated from Niagara.

"I am sitting so close to the great Horseshoe Fall," she wrote, "that the spray damps my paper as I write. The thunder of the mass of falling water makes grand music all around me, and glancing up I notice a rainbow spanning the Fall with its broad ribbon of gold, purple and crimson."

After further description she says:

"There is a mighty *onwardness* about Niagara, which is stimulating and inspiring. No outside power can check or obstruct it. Only one thing ever stops the flow of Niagara. And that is not an outward obstruction placed in its way, but a change in itself, a consolidating of its beautiful flow, an icy piling up of its delicate spray. When Niagara *freezes*, Niagara ceases to flow."

And thence she draws a lesson for the human heart, as she loved to do from nature; in icebound Niagara she finds a warning against the danger of a frozen heart, "checking the flow—through us and from us—of Divine and human love."

In this letter she tells of the great gathering at Chautauqua itself, where she spoke to an audience of 8000 people. She ends her letter

with a description of the gathering at Coshocton, the last Chautauqua of the trip.

"Of all the Chautauquas this was—for me—the best," she writes. "The auditorium held 3200 people, and we had it crammed, both afternoon and evening. My time was the evening: I experienced such happy liberty in speaking, and the people were so responsive. It is difficult for me to describe it to you, but I can only say: If all the travelling had been for that one meeting alone, it would have been worth it.

"The heat was intense. The whole audience *fanned* with large palm-leaf fans all the time. At first it is rather bewildering, but one soon becomes used to it. The men all use fans also; and it is a delicate attention when the man works his fan in such a way that the lady sitting next him shares his breeze! The ceaseless, rhythmic movement of thousands of palm-leaf fans is a curious sight. And I must tell you one thing which is apt to happen; and any public speaker or preacher who reads these lines will appreciate its effect upon the mind of the lecturer. If you tell an arresting story, or use a thrilling illustration, all the fans suddenly poise motionless. But, when the climax is reached and you proceed to point the moral, the fans move on again. It is quite unintentional, an unconscious outward demonstration of the mental condition of the audience; but

it takes a good deal of nerve not to curtail that application. I am inclined to think the fan custom may be largely responsible for the perpetual introduction of anecdote, the catch-phrases, and the clap-trap style which we find so prevalent in popular American oratory. One might easily be tempted to *aim* at the arresting of the fans!"

My mother often referred to this little incident later; she said it had taught her a deep lesson, both as speaker and writer—namely, that a story should always carry its moral in itself and not need to have a moral tacked on, an application laboriously made, seeming of less intrinsic interest than the story. The true teacher must not allow the sudden flagging of interest (displayed by the resumed activity of the fans) just when the really important part of the lesson has been reached.

My mother's last letter to her Leyton friends was written on the deck of the White Star liner, *Baltic*. It recounts a little incident that afforded her great pleasure—more on account of the kind thought and appreciation of her work than because of the material benefit.

"When I came on board," she writes, "a pleasant surprise awaited me. I went straight to my little single-berth state-room, expecting

to find my luggage there; instead of which I found a letter from the New York manager of the White Star Line, informing me that No. 74 was placed at my disposal, and asking me to accept this improved accommodation, with the compliments of the company. I went to No. 74, and there sat my three trunks, looking very small —instead of filling the whole place—in the largest double state-room on the *Baltic*; such a beautiful apartment, with an extra large berth, a wardrobe, a couch, an arm-chair, a writing-table, a whatnot for flowers, and three electric lights in the ceiling, besides a little movable electric reading-lamp. This kind consideration on the part of the company is adding greatly to the enjoyment of the return voyage."

And so, with a graphic description of passing an iceberg—"a floating snow mountain in mid-ocean"—and "a spouting, romping shoal of young whales"; with a final impression of Chautauqua lecturing, ends this series of letters.

And yet there is one more that I feel I must quote—not from my mother herself but from her sister. It explains itself:

"34 West 28th Street, New York City,
"Sept. 13th, 1909.

"My beloved sister has sailed away from our shores and ere long will be in your midst again. I know that one more letter of her

journeying in America is to appear in your paper, and it has occurred to me that the story would be very incomplete without a few lines from my pen, because I know her well enough to feel confident that of *her* success and achievement she will say nothing.

"It has been my joy and privilege to listen to her inspiring, and, I believe, God-inspired words as she has met and thrilled the great audiences which have gathered to listen to her at the Chautauquas of the West. I have been so proud of her, so happy to introduce her to the public of this great land of my adoption. She has come to many hearts as a bright ray of sunshine, and has left everywhere the deepest impression, not only through her message, but through her own sweet personality.

"When our tour was planned, I studied the schedule calling for such early rises, so many nights on the cars, such furious flights across country, such close connections at points of change, with my heart a little misgiving me. I am a seasoned traveller in this land of rush, used to the journeys over immense distances, by long habit, but I find few among my friends and workers who can keep up with me; so you will understand my feelings as I wondered how my sister would stand the experience. I was delightedly surprised at the result. She proved herself always bright and buoyant in spirit, patient in difficulties, smiling through heat and dust and discomfort, contented with snatches

of sleep and meals at unseasonable hours, and seemed to gain in health with every increase of work and effort.

"She travelled like a veteran of the road, and I can truly say we enjoyed every hour of the trip, save those, perhaps, spent on the cattle train—but even then she tried to write letters, and managed between bumps to take a little peaceful sleep!

"I wish you could have seen and heard her in the great Chautauqua tents and buildings. It is no easy task when unaccustomed to these places to make the people hear, and it is still more difficult to hold the audiences in our great heat, especially when one remembers that they are composed of so varying a crowd, from tiny children to aged people, many of whom have driven thirty miles across country, and may have that far to drive again during the night. Not only did she thrill her hearers, holding her audiences spell-bound with intense interest, but far above and beyond any power of eloquence she left in their hearts a blessing, and made the dear Book of books a more vital, living truth to guide their lives.

"I need not tell you how truly she has won all hearts, both in the prisons and out in the free world, because you know her, and those who know her can appreciate that this is bound to be the case wherever she goes. You missed her during these weeks of absence, but can you understand what it has been to me to have her

again after the long years of separation? In childhood we were inseparable; an exceptionally close tie of love and sympathy bound us together, and I feel I owe much (an unpayable debt of gratitude) to her for the sweet, unselfish influence of her Christian life. When we met on the 9th July we took up our life together just as intimately and naturally as if no intervening years or distance or new claims had come to us in the interim, and during the happy days, heart to heart, we have been one in thought and interest and purpose."

During the last weeks of this visit to America my mother had been hard at work reading the proofs of "The Rosary."

She visited America again a year later—a short visit this time—to be in the country for the publication of "The Mistress of Shenstone." Always she kept in her heart a very warm corner for the great American public that had given her so kind a welcome, and has always given to her books so enthusiastic a reception.

IX: THE WRITING OF "THE ROSARY"

MY mother's life had been a full one—full in many ways. It had been full of work. Always she had as much work on hand as she could get through, and when she was not working she was busy taking the active recreation which was really necessary. She was never idle, never indefinitely occupied with mere trivialities. Her life, too, was full of success. Full, also, of love—for all who knew her, loved her, and she felt nothing but friendship towards everyone she came across. She had no enemies; she was far above petty feuds and jealousies and scandals. Finally, her life was full of joy—for, more than any one I know, she knew how to enjoy things. Her pre-eminent natural gift was music; her most highly developed talent, public speaking. She had come, one may say, to her maturity. There was nothing about her suggestive of the genius who has not yet found an adequate means of expression; nothing disappointed; no craving for the world's recognition. Her personality seemed singularly

complete. And yet there were great things still to come; undreamed-of success; a sphere of work waiting to satisfy her boundless energy.

My mother had always shone as a teller of stories—whether on the platform or at her own dinner-table. As a child she had scribbled assiduously. In her younger days she had written and published a "religious novel"; but her busy life had never allowed sufficient leisure for the exercise of what seemed to be merely one of the many talents of her versatile nature.

In 1905, however, something moved her to write a little story, "The Wheels of Time," for no particular purpose, nor with any very definite idea of publication. But this very dramatic little study of human emotion was to prove itself of more importance than she had thought. For, its vivid characters once conceived, she became so much interested in them that they had the effect of setting her creative imagination in motion. This was, as it were, the opening of the sluice-gates of her "unconscious mind"; and out of it rose, full and strong, the long-pent-up store of human experience, sympathetic impression, emotions, fancies, ideals. A great story was forming itself in her mind.

It was characteristic of her that she only

allowed it a secondary place, and continued the course of her ordinary life without allowing herself the relief of writing—save on one memorable night, when, sitting in the corner of a third-class railway compartment, travelling from London to Hertford, she wrote the "terrace scene" * of "The Rosary"!

And then, quite unexpectedly, she found herself laid low, with the prospect of many months of confinement. She had over-strained her heart by her long bicycle ride to Cromer, and acute symptoms now caused her doctors to take a very serious view of her condition.

At first she was obliged to lie flat, and attacks were frequent and painful. But after some weeks of rest she was able to be slightly raised, and it occurred to her that now, at last, she could unburden her soul, and write what she called "the story of Jane."

It was all there, simply asking to come out, and her pencil flew over sheet after sheet of manuscript paper, without pause or hesitancy. The work was sheer delight, exhilaration of mind and body, and every night she would read aloud what she had done that day, with the sense that it was something good.

* Garth's declaration of love.

It was one of her elder daughters who was nursing her through this illness. She had gone for a moment into a room adjoining my mother's, leaving the door open. My mother was busy with her book. Presently my sister heard her call:

"What song shall Jane sing?"

"'The Rosary,'" called back my sister, remembering that the American song had pleased my mother before the commencement of her illness, and that she used to play and sing it, herself.

And so Jane sang "The Rosary," and gradually the song got interwoven with the story, more and more. But Jane might equally well have sung some other song, and the book still have become a "best seller" under another title. The incident clearly shows that the book was not written "round the song," as is so often supposed, nor "inspired by the song," but that the song was quite accidental to the story.

Meanwhile eight months passed by, and at last she was able to leave her room and go to the Isle of Wight to complete her convalescence. By the summer (1907) she had recovered sufficiently to take up much of her old work, and the two manuscripts were put away.

How long they might have remained in oblivion it is hard to say, had she not chanced to send the manuscript of "The Wheels of Time" to her sister, Mrs. Ballington Booth, who, at once realising its worth, insisted on its publication, and it made its appearance in September 1908.

Mrs. Booth's appreciation of "The Wheels of Time," and urgent demand to see her long novel, led my mother to begin copying out her pencil manuscript. In the Christmas holidays she read it aloud to her enthusiastic family. I well remember how we sat round in breathless interest, time seeming to fly as my mother's beautiful voice read on and on. At last she would stop and lay down the manuscript, but no one would move, and laughingly she would take it up once more and read on until something obliged the party to break up. But eagerly it would collect again at the first opportunity.

It was when she had finished copying the book that my mother reached the stage at which (as in the case of almost all her novels) she suddenly felt the whole thing was bad, absurd, worse than useless, fit only for the flames! She even got as far as locking herself into her room with the purpose of burning the manuscript. Something, however, stayed her hand, and

"The Rosary" was not lost to the world. Before long it was safely in the mail bound for America.

My aunt, delighted with it, offered the manuscript to Messrs. Putnams (one of the leading publishers of New York), who accepted it at once. And so it was that in November 1909 "The Rosary" made its appearance in London and America simultaneously.

Its reception was even better than the publishers had anticipated. The public, caring little that the author was unknown, were buying up the first edition at a surprising rate. Glowing reviews appeared in every department of the Press. Soon it became evident that not only English and American readers were talking enthusiastically of the new novel, but Australia and the other Overseas Dominions had taken the book to their hearts.

It was in the second half-year of "The Rosary's" life, however, that its sales began to increase at such an astonishing rate. By the end of the first year 150,000 copies had been sold, and two impressions a month were being printed during a certain period, while a perfectly steady sale went on and on, showing no signs of abatement! "The Rosary" had become a household

word, the purple book was to be seen everywhere, in railway compartment, hotel lounge, and under the arms of busy people hurrying along the streets, while "Florence Barclay" was, as it were, the name of an old friend in thousands of English-speaking homes.

Of course my mother was delighted at this unexpected success. But it was not the fame she cared about. She had not set out to win literary laurels, and what pleased her most was not the praise of reviewers but the frank affection of the public. Her ardent nature had always longed instinctively for the sympathy and appreciation that lies at the root of all real popularity, and now that it had at last come to her, she received it with a childlike delight. All her life her predominant desire had been *to please;* and now she had apparently pleased the whole world! *

I do not believe that the soul of a true artist ever gets tarnished by pride or conceit He longs for sympathy, he thirsts for appreciation. He frankly delights in it when he gets it. He may yield a little to the enthusiastic people who like to "lionise," but that is only part of

* *The Rosary* has been translated into eight languages, and over a million copies of it have been sold.

his childlike honesty and lack of false humility and pose. Even so my mother. Her success, her new friends, her new interests and opportunities changed her not at all. She entered into them all with genuine enjoyment, but remained the same simple personality. She never went out of her way to shine in literary circles, to accumulate eminent acquaintances. Hence this book does not at this point develop (as might be expected) into a kind of literary memoir wherein move all kinds of interesting persons. No, to the end my mother found her happiness in the very simple things of life—in animals, in the world's beauty, in music and travel and friendship and the joy of helping humble people along the road to Heaven.

No one has ever been able to explain what it was about "The Rosary" that so captivated the public. Some have thought that it was my mother's own vivid, sympathetic, magnetic personality embodied in the story, creating its very atmosphere, informing and permeating her style; that it was her wonderful *sympathy*—a sympathy that enabled her to draw in her books real people, with real emotions. She sympathised so truly with each of her

characters that the reader could not but sympathise too; could not but get deeply engrossed, and feel that the characters really lived. People said that to read her books was *to live*, for the time, in the world they portrayed; to make friends with the people of that world; to share with them their joys and sorrows and anxieties and loves. The world she portrayed was a very sunny world; its people charming, amusing, true and brave. Hence it was a delight to the reader to live therein, for a while; to forget, perchance, the dull or sad world of his own life, the disappointing people of his acquaintance.

Only true sympathy with mankind can enable a writer to create people who seem to live. The reading public, though I suppose it did not thus analyse its impression, showed in many ways that it recognised this gift of sympathy in the writer of the books. It is an interesting point, worth examining; almost a little psychological study.

First, the books, quite *impersonal* as they were—and as fiction must necessarily be—had everywhere the effect of winning people's affection for and confidence in the writer herself. Daily, my mother received a large number of

letters. Many of these were not the letters of mere autograph-hunters, but the quite intimate letters of people seeking sympathy and understanding—lonely people, sad people, people in perplexities; or of happy readers eager to tell from full hearts how much her books had meant to them, sometimes merely in simple enjoyment, sometimes spiritually, or in helping to solve one of life's problems. It must have been because these readers scented in her stories something more than a fertile imagination; it was she herself that held them, that spoke to them, that led them to know instinctively that they would be understood, treated with friendship.

Secondly, wherever my mother went she found herself greeted by unknown friends. Her photograph had been on the wrappers of several of her books, and often strangers would recognise her; or she would be advertised as speaking at some religious gathering, and multitudes of readers would throng the meeting, often to the surprise of the good people organising it! It is the attitude of these readers that was enlightening. They would, as a matter of course, claim her as a friend. There was none of the usual English shyness, of the fear of

intruding, of the thirst for a formal introduction. They would just clasp her hand as if she was an old friend found again, and say, with radiant faces, how pleased they were to meet her. And they would seem so sure that she would be pleased to meet them, and hear how they liked her books—and of course she was.

It was always the readers who made the first advance: she never courted recognition. Only to one set of people did she introduce herself, and that was to *the booksellers*. She had a very tender corner in her heart for the booksellers; for the men who actually dealt out the books to the public, who displayed them so artistically in their windows, recommended them so warmly to their customers, and shared with her the pecuniary reward of her success. When she visited a town she would look in at the chief booksellers. Often she would be recognised at once; but if she was not, she would make an enquiry as to whether the books were going well. If the bookseller seemed responsive on the subject, she would very quietly make herself known. Instantly his face would light up, and generally his hand would be outstretched across his counter. Delightedly she would listen to the "trade"

point of view of her books. One story pleased her in particular—that of a man whose business had practically failed. He decided on a bold step: he would sink all he had in a large stock of "Barclays," and catch the public eye, one morning, by displaying a window dressed entirely with the purple books. It was a bold speculation, but it succeeded: the "Barclay books" had saved his little business, and he pressed my mother's hand in gratitude.

The interest of the public in the *writer* of the books was quickly gauged by the press, and many papers asked for "interviews," and sent along friendly newspaper men and photographers. My mother welcomed them, not with the idea of getting a cheap advertisement, but because, if the public wanted to know what she looked like at home, and all about how she tamed her birds, and where she wrote her books, she was delighted to tell them and let them see!—were they not her dear friends, who bought books so eagerly, and read them to pieces in the libraries? I have before me a pile of such "interviews," one illustrated by no less than fifteen photographs of my mother and her home!

My mother's sympathy was universal. Perhaps

that was why her books appealed to people so diverse in every way; to members of every social stratum, to individuals of every type, from the royalty she revered to the working people she loved.

How the wounded Tommies loved her books! One day she went into a hut at the Netley Red Cross Hospital, and she saw a man screened off because his wounds were so severe. He was reading "The Following of the Star." She asked him gently if he liked it. "Yes," he said, "it makes me forget my pain." She always treasured that remark as her very highest reward.

"DEAR MADAM,—I have just put down the 'Star,' and venture to write that Chapter 38 is, in my humble opinion, a masterpiece," wrote Sir Evelyn Wood. "I doubt whether any man could have written it, nor indeed but very few women."

Canon Lyttelton, then the Headmaster of Eton, wrote his appreciation too—of "The Rosary" especially, but also of other of the books. The late Sir George Alexander offered her a box for one of his plays, that he might meet her and discuss dramatisation. Charles A. Watts, editor of the *Literary Guide and*

Rationalist Review, wrote to her: "I am inclined to think that 'The Following of the Star' is your best book. I read it through and richly enjoyed every chapter." Church dignitaries, like the Dean of Worcester, were her enthusiastic readers; Dr. Campbell Morgan recommended "The Rosary" as a book "to keep and read again." In short, her books appealed to intellectual people of all sorts; while, on the other hand, I have seen poor women in the slums of London brighten at the sight of one of the purple books—the books that "did them good" after a long day's work.

American enthusiasm took yet another form, and American readers had a chance of showing their appreciation in their own way when my mother visited their country in 1910, for the publication of "The Mistress of Shenstone."

To English readers it may seem a surprising outburst, and very different to anything that can be imagined as taking place in England by way of reception accorded to a private individual. Indeed, it took my mother herself completely by surprise, but the genuine welcome it implied was, to her, a real pleasure. I give the account of it in the words of her friend, Miss Maud Burdett, who accompanied her on this trip.

Emberson

AT WORK.

Chapter XI

The years roll back

"Hugh!" exclaimed the Princess.

And again, in utter bewilderment: "Hugh?"

And yet a third time, in a low whisper of horror, passing her left hand across her eyes, as if to clear from her outer vision some intruder of the inner mind: "Hugh!"

The silent Knight still made no answer, but he threw aside the clinging robes, stepped down out of their circle, strode forward, both arms outstretched.

"Back!" cried the Princess. But her hand had left the hilt of the dagger. "I owe no

PAGE FROM "THE WHITE LADIES OF WORCESTER."

"Though Mrs. Barclay had received many letters of appreciation from all parts of the world she had not the faintest idea of the warmth of feeling the Americans had for her, and was quite unprepared for any special reception; so much so, in fact, that as we steamed slowly into New York Harbour and came alongside the quay, she did not expect to see more than her sister and a few friends awaiting her.

"As we stood looking out eagerly for well-known faces, we noticed a throng of people standing together on a part of the quay all hung with purple draperies. Many of these people held and waved bunches of violets, and were looking eagerly towards the boat. For a moment we wondered what the demonstration could be, and then, suddenly, we saw a purple banner with 'THE ROSARY' upon it, in large gold letters. It came as a shock of surprise to Mrs. Barclay!

"On landing we were at once surrounded by reporters, photographers, and the crowd of delighted readers who had gathered to do her honour and give her America's welcome. In this surge I lost sight of Mrs. Barclay, so turned my attention to the luggage, expecting the usual formalities and difficulties one usually meets with on arrival in America. But to my surprise on presenting the keys I was told that 'the luggage of the Author of "The Rosary" need not be examined.'

"Many other unexpected marks of appreciation were shown during this trip; such as, for instance, refusal on the part of hotel proprietors to accept payment, presenting, instead of a bill, a respectful note of thanks to 'the Author of "The Rosary"' for having done them the honour of staying in their hotel"!

There is one more point that must be touched on in writing of "The Rosary." Its large sales naturally brought my mother considerable sums of money. Perhaps no one can quite understand what this meant to her generous heart. Her sympathy with other people could not but make her realise very constantly what enormous happiness could be given by money rightly spent. She longed to give—and yet she had not the means. Some little while before she began to write "The Rosary" she had come across several cases of great necessity which it was a real sorrow to her not to be able to assist. And so, one day, she knelt and prayed quite definitely that she "might be entrusted with the sum of £4000 a year." Having made her request she felt quite confident that she would obtain it in God's good time. It never occurred to her that she herself would earn the money; she had some vague idea

that a rich old lady would unaccountably make her a legacy. And so, when her big royalty payments began to come in, she knew that her prayer had been heard, and she looked upon the money as "entrusted to her."

It is typical of her wonderful sense of equity and justice that her first act, on finding herself so suddenly enriched, was not to launch forth on some scheme of romantic charity, but simply to raise the wages of her household. "Let not your left hand know what your right hand doeth," said Christ, and she definitely took this text as her rule. Few people realised her lavish generosity, for her name seldom appeared in public subscription lists; her generosity was in the unseen corners of the earth. She was busy sharing her money with those who needed it, her true sympathy giving her a wonderful discrimination, and her *perfect way of giving* enabling her to help those who would never have accepted a less genuinely spontaneous charity. It was not a case of small presents, but of big items like the education of the sons of friends, the saving of a bankrupt business, the summer holiday of a family, the repairs of a house. No one will ever know the large number of people whose lives were made happy

by the money she earned by her pen. She never spoke of them even at home; in fact, they knew their secrets were safe in her keeping.

Besides her bigger acts of generosity she would take endless trouble over those little gifts that mean so much, and, for her, Christmastide was a period of hard work. The number of big Christmas hampers she sent to people whose fare, she guessed, would not be very adequate to the joyful season, will never be known.

She spent very little on herself, and when she bought a car (largely to facilitate her getting about to her meetings) she was continually using it in the service of others.

The charitable work in which she took the greatest personal interest was the Home for Motherless Children at Woodford; though many other good works also received her generous support.

The vast public which bought her books should feel a sense of gratification at the thought that their money found its way into the hands of one whose first thought was to redistribute it to those whose need, if not always the most apparent, was the most real. It is to such that Christ has promised to say: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared

for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

And the naïve surprise of "the righteous" on hearing these words is typical of the simple, generous, unself-conscious givers like my mother, for they say: "Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? . . . And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." *

* Matthew xxv. 34–40.

X: ITALY

HOT, golden, glowing sunshine; fathomless blue sky; Florence, spread out in an extent of red-brown roofs, softened by the morning haze, with here and there a window sparkling like diamonds; and through all, the Arno winding—a green ribbon threaded through many bridges.

Up the long flight of stone steps my mother had climbed, and now stood on the stone-walled terrace of San Miniato looking down upon the city. Away beyond it spread the purple *campagna*, dotted with its white and pink plaster houses and spiky black cypresses and pink blossom.

"I feel, somehow, as if I belong to it all," she said, her face radiant with joy and the Italian sun; "as if I had found it at last, and come home. I can't express what I feel. . . ." But I knew what she meant, and one *felt that* about her as she walked with such delight in the streets of Florence, explored places of interest, and entered the dark, cool churches

in the spirit of a worshipper and not of a sightseer.

San Marco pleased her greatly, not only on account of the beauty of its cloisters, looking out on the shady square of turf and great, dark cedar, but chiefly because of Fra Angelico's frescoes.

Fra Angelico was a man who worshipped God with his brush; who prayed that he might paint well, and produced pictures that are themselves adoring prayers. In fact it is said that he painted kneeling. This welding of religion and art spoke the very language of my mother's heart, and as she passed from cell to cell she felt a true kinship of spirit between herself and that Dominican friar of long ago. For by his brush he spoke with simple, thoughtful love of all the same subjects on which she so often spoke in words. He, too, had lived in the Gospel story and made it the very home of his mind. Her delight, therefore, was great when she found borne out in one of his pictures a favourite conjecture of her own.

She always loved to believe that the Garden of Gethsemane, on the Mount of Olives, belonged to Martha and Mary, and that that was why Christ had free access to it at night. And here

was Fra Angelico thinking the same thing! For in the fresco where he depicts the Agony in the Garden there is, not far off, a little house; and outside the house sit Martha and her sister Mary—(Martha with a black halo to show she was not quite so blessed as Mary!). This little discovery pleased my mother more than words can say.

She took scant interest in Savonarola's hair-shirt, preserved in a glass case—her soul was too much absorbed in the chastened beauty of his brother's art, which seemed to her nearer to the spirit of Christ.

But it was not so much the "sights" of Florence that she loved as the quaint back streets, the fascinating market, the shops of the dealers in antiques; or the Ponte San Trinita at sunset, with the Arno flowing away into the golden west.

The shops on the romantic Ponte Vecchio were a favourite haunt, and she had a way of winning the friendship of the Italian dealers, so that they would spend hours showing her all their treasures, not pressing her to buy but pleased to see her enjoyment of the things of beauty they themselves loved so much. It was in the shop of one, Angelo Melli, that she

discovered the little bird in a jewelled box. For many days she called on him and heard him sing, and at last she bought him.

Certosa appealed to her very much, standing white and beautiful at the top of its vine-clad terraces. She liked the monks' cells, each with its own tiny garden (still just as they were planned 500 years before). She liked the monks, too, in their white habits—especially a charming one called Fra Paccamus, who explained that once he had been a cavalry officer, and had been thrown from his horse and all but killed. His escape had been so marvellous that in gratitude he had given himself to God, in this life of prayer. He showed us and told us many things, because, I think, he felt we understood.

She liked the big quadrangle in the middle of the monastery, with long-bearded, ancient lay brothers wheeling barrows along the paths; and the well with the pulley and bucket, and a little plant of violets flowering from a cranny in the wall, half-way down, and watered (so Fra Paccamus told us) by drops from the buckets as water was drawn from the well. She liked the beautiful church and the exquisite polished marble in the crypt. She loved the distant view of Florence and the purple hills

that looked like so many brilliant little pictures framed by the square stone-work of the cell windows. Also the grassy terrace dotted with red anemones, where the monks walked in the cool of the day, allowed (just for one hour) to break their silence and talk together of all that was in their hearts.

Fiesole, too, appealed to her, with its great Etruscan remains all overgrown with grass and wild flowers; and the convent of brown-clad, sandalled friars. Especially the sight as we entered the dark church pleased her, for a young friar was playing a little organ very softly, the yellow light of a lamp thrown up on to his beautiful, happy face, his long, thin hands moving gently about the keys, and his music stealing softly through the church. He smiled at us gravely to show we were not intruding, and played on.

She loved the great Duomo, standing as it does in the very heart of Florence, all thronged by houses; she loved its great red dome and the cool vastness of its interior.

She climbed to the high top of the Campanile, noting the strange effect of seeing a wide and always wider view from each set of windows, as one mounts and mounts.

But two spots in Florence were pre-eminently

dear to her—one, the great stone monument in the English cemetery, bearing the brief inscription, " E. B. B." ; the other, the Casa Guidi.

In all English literature nothing had so greatly aroused her enthusiasm or won her heart as the Browning Love Letters. These letters that so wonderfully reveal a very perfect love appealed to her as no other book ever appealed to her. It was because they were not art but reality, life. Elizabeth Barrett Browning she truly enshrined in her thoughts.

In London she had discovered the house—50 Wimpole Street—where her side of the correspondence was penned, as she lay in the room that was her prison and from which she so bravely ran away to wed her poet lover. She had visited the church where they were married —Marylebone Parish Church—and found the entry in the register ; and now she greatly longed to visit the place where that frail form was laid to rest, and the house where those years of idyllic married life were passed.

We accompanied her to the gate of the English cemetery, and left her to find E. B. B., alone.

During her stay in Florence she often visited the grave, and would sit for hours by it in the sun, writing the latter part of " The Following

of the Star." One day, as she was thus occupied, two American tourists came up. They walked round the sarcophagus, wondering aloud if this really was Mrs. Browning's grave.

My mother, of course, informed them that it *was*; and finding they knew nothing about Mrs. Browning except that she was an English poetess and her grave a place to be verified, she told them a great deal about her beloved E. B. B. — pleased at having enthusiastic listeners.

The Americans were charmed, but before they went they remarked:

"And may we ask what you are writing?"

"A novel," my mother smilingly replied.

"Is that *so*?" said the Americans. "Now, that's very interesting. Have you written many novels?"

"A good many," said my mother.

"Might we ask," persevered the Americans, "what are the titles of some of your books?"

"One's called 'The Rosary,'" said my mother, with just a little twinkle.

There was a moment's silence while the Americans took in the fact, and then, to my mother's surprise, one of them burst into tears! Clasping my mother's hand, she explained that

she and her husband had read the book together, shortly before his death, and that it had meant so very much to them. My mother was greatly touched by the little incident.

The Casa Guidi she went over, too; and tried to awaken in her family at least a spark of her own devotion. On being shown a large room in the front of the house, which she was assured was Mrs. Browning's room, she refused to believe it, for in her letters E. B. B. had mentioned a balcony on which she walked with "Fluff," her little dog. Going through the house, to her joy she discovered the room, and walked on the balcony.

Among her very greatest treasures were what she called "the Browning relics." It was with great interest that she heard a sale of Browning things was to take place. She went to it and managed to secure many things intimately connected with E. B. B. Among these was her favourite chair. This my mother always kept in her writing-room at the Corner House, with a silk cord tied across from arm to arm, to prevent any sacrilegious person from sitting down upon it. This room was, in fact, called "the Browning room." It also contained the table on which "Aurora Leigh" was written;

and Robert Browning's great green velvet arm-chair. Upon the walls hung two very beautiful life-size portraits of the poets. On the back of E. B. B.'s is written, in Robert Browning's handwriting: "Incomparable portrait, by far the best ever taken." These are by an Italian artist, Gordigiani, and are very striking. He has made the most of beauty of expression where actual beauty of feature was lacking; and the softness and delicacy of the painting gives to the portraits a real charm. It was my mother's wish to bequeath these to the nation by their presentation to the National Portrait Gallery. They have been offered and gratefully accepted; but, however much art connoisseurs may appreciate them, they will never again come in for such a wealth of love as was bestowed upon them in the years during which they hung on the walls of my mother's room!

Browning's watch and chain she also bought; not because she wanted *them* particularly, but because upon his chain hung a tiny gold signet ring—the gift of a friend to E. B. B., and long worn on her little finger. Also the note from her thanking her for it—typical because of its perfection of expression and the amount of her own personality that gets into those few lines.

E. B. B.'s mother-of-pearl tea-caddy is also among the relics, and a beautiful little miniature of herself.

Florence had, therefore, an added sense of romance, since it was consecrated by the love and admiration of the poets, and hallowed by being their home for so many years.

Another favourite spot of my mother's was Bellagio, on Lake Como. She always stayed at the Hotel de Florence, where she was sure of a smiling welcome from her friend the proprietor—Signor Gramatica—and of the best attention.

She loved to sit on the vine-clad terraces, beneath the whispering olive trees, where, below, the lake showed clearest blue between the straight black cypresses, or a misty silver, as evening closed in and the distant, snow-capped mountains loomed purple against a golden sky.

Sometimes we would row across the lake, and coming home in the darkness she always loved the golden, shimmery blaze of Bellagio's lights reflected in the lake.

My mother had a wonderful gift for recognising the genuine articles of real worth among antiques of every description—whether weapons, pictures,

jewels, glass or other treasures. She bought several beautiful things during these visits to Italy and Switzerland. But it was not only abroad that she would pick up treasures. For instance, passing the window of a dusty little old curiosity shop in Brighton one night, she caught sight of an ebony walking-stick, inlaid with ivory and silver. She went in and offered the dealer a five pound note for it. He was very pleased and seemed to think it a good bargain. Five years later, when my mother gave a number of her treasures to the Red Cross Sale at Christie's, that they might be sold for the benefit of the wounded, it fetched fifty guineas. She had already had the stick valued by a connoisseur; and on learning that it was worth so very much more than she had given, she said that if she ever sold it she should send a cheque to the Brighton dealer, for obviously her five pounds had not been a fair offer. Her keen sense of justice made her feel that it was not fair that her guess should enrich her at the expense of his mistake!

A similar case was that of a little jewelled troubadour. Parting with him cost her a very great deal: she loved him above all her treasures. She had given £12 for him, in Florence, and

he went for eighty guineas at the Red Cross Sale! The fact that the money went to the wounded made her feel quite happy as to the price she had given for these two things.

As a rule, however, she had an intuitive knowledge of the true value of things, and of what was a fair price to offer. She never bargained with Italian dealers. She would examine the article and name her price quite decidedly. The man would, of course, pretend to be aghast; he would say it was absurd, he had paid twice that himself, and all the rest of it. My mother would only smile quietly and repeat her offer. If she wanted the thing badly she would call in, every day, to see it. In the end the man would come down to her price.

She loved these treasures of hers, and they were a source of the keenest pleasure to her. No one can guess quite how much it cost her when she gave some of them to the Red Cross Sale. It was characteristic of her that she gave those she loved the most.

But if the Red Cross Sale took from her things that were very precious, it also supplied her with new delights. She felt free to buy at these sales, since it was really a bestowing of money on a most worthy cause. Here she bought a

great many arms. The ones that pleased her most were a Louis XV rapier, a sword worn by Lord Nelson, and a dirk he possessed as a midshipman. She always kept her arms on a polished table in her writing-room, and took great delight in showing them to people. Among them was an ancient stiletto, bought in Florence, with Masonic devices on its ivory handle.

She travelled in Germany, too, a year before the war. At Leipzig she bought a very beautiful old 'cello. She took it home and was able to play it at once, though she had never taken lessons. She describes this in "The Upas Tree." Some time after she had written the book, in which she describes how in days gone by the 'cello had received a blow from a dagger aimed at the man who was playing it, she was deeply interested to find that quite clearly a piece of wood had been inserted in her 'cello, as if a hole had been skilfully mended, in exactly the same spot which she described in her story. This increased her belief in her theory concerning the psychic effect of old things upon the mind. She liked to think that articles of furniture or other possessions of people of long ago could somehow call up in the minds of those attuned a consciousness of these long-passed events. She

believed that this might be the explanation of most ghost stories.

Another place she visited was The Hague. Her books had been translated into Dutch, and had received a very warm welcome in Holland. Consequently when it got out that "the author of 'The Rosary'" was staying at a hotel in The Hague, numbers of keen readers called upon her, and she held quite a little reception in her rooms. Their kindness and cordiality, and the polished manners of the Dutch, pleased her very much, and it was with real pleasure she accepted the invitations she received.

She also travelled in Belgium, in earlier days, and stayed for some time in the hapless little town of Dinant, its great beauty appealing to her strongly. It is interesting to remember that her own birthplace was the Isle of Jersey, where her mother and father stayed on their way home from some months passed in the South of France.

Much as my mother loved all these countries, in her heart of hearts England always held first place.

XI: NOVEL WRITING: IDEALS AND METHODS

"MY aim is: Never to write a line which could introduce the taint of sin, or the shadow of shame, into any home. Never to draw a character which should tend to lower the ideals of those who, by means of my pen, make intimate acquaintance with a man or a woman of my own creating.

"There is enough sin in the world without an author's powers of imagination being used in order to add even fictitious sin to the amount. Too many bad, mean, morbid characters already, alas! walk this earth. Why should writers add to their number, and risk introducing them into beautiful homes where such people in actual life would never, for one moment, be tolerated?

"A great French savant and writer has said: 'The only excuse for fiction is that it should be more beautiful than fact.'

"Saint Paul has laid it down as an inspired rule for the human mind: 'Whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, think on these things.'

"It seems to me that in according so generous

a reception to 'The Rosary,' and to other books of the same tone and calibre, the public has frankly given its assent to this divine precept, and its verdict in favour of writers who are humbly, yet earnestly, endeavouring to make it their rule and guide, and who may, therefore, with glad assurance take courage and go forward."

So wrote my mother; and it was, so to speak, her literary profession of faith.

She was out to supply her fellow men with joy, refreshment, inspiration. She was not out to make art for art's sake, or to perform a literary *tour de force*, or to rival the makers of fiction of the past. By eschewing tragedy, by foregoing the depiction of the more violent human emotions, by substituting a delicate fancy for a burning realism, she sacrificed the dramatic opportunities her vivid imagination could easily have supplied.

The busy men and women who form the majority of the reading public, and who read fiction by way of relaxation and enjoyment, do not desire to have productions of literary "art" supplied to them, that their critical faculties may be exercised and their minds educated to a precise valuation of dramatic

form, powerful realism, high tragedy. They ask merely to be pleased, rested, interested, amused, inspired to a more living faith in the beauty of human affection and the goodness of God. My mother was the friend of these ordinary readers; she was out to supply them with what they wanted; to fulfil their expectations, to vindicate their trust; she had no eye to the literary connoisseur, the seeker after mere artistic effect.

I tried in another chapter to suggest the reason for the popularity of her books, and I attributed their power to her sympathy. This was, I think, the secret of their universal appeal. But I believe the reason why people *bought* the books in so unusual a way was just because of what I have said above: the books so exactly fulfilled the requirements of a novel, that people were ready to buy them and take them home to read again when they wanted to be refreshed after the dust and heat and weariness of the day. A problem novel may be interesting; a novel with a teaching purpose may be a necessary form of education; a book that is a piece of remorseless realism may be stimulating; but people do not want to *possess* books of that sort; they feel a little doubtful about lending them

to their friends; they do not feel drawn towards reading them a second time, or dipping into them when the world's sunshine is, for a while, absent; in short, they do not care to have them as part of the permanent furniture of their homes. I think it was this meeting of a public need that gave the books their big sales; and I emphasise the point because it was a quite conscious aim of my mother's. She loved to think that she was brightening the lives of millions of unknown people, resting the minds of the world's workers. It was for them she wrote—not for the critics.

It was for this reason that she so consistently avoided that artistic achievement—"a sad ending." One of her books—"The Following of the Star"—had, quite obviously, a sad ending, and of course she knew it. But out of sheer consideration for her readers she added a short chapter ending the book on the note of happiness. It cost her something, in a way; and yet, in another, it satisfied her warm-hearted desire to please, to give happiness.

There is another reason, too, why people *bought* her books instead of merely borrowing; why, for instance, the father of a family would be glad to introduce them into his home circle.

The reason is told by my mother herself in the extract I have quoted. A man may read the history of some vile character and his viler doings with a very human thrill of interest as he travels up to business in the train. But he changes the book at Smith's without regret, and hopes his wife and daughters won't come across it. As for having it permanently about the house—God forbid!

This ideal was also an ever-present one with my mother. She believed that the average Englishman has a decent mind, and she felt strongly that writers ought to respect this. She knew that human nature has hard enough temptations to cope with as it is, without having them inflamed by the imaginative power of writers of fiction. Besides, sin in any form was, to her, too horrible a thing to make "copy" out of. To her, sin was not merely a contradiction of the laws of society, but an outrage against God.

There was, of course, a good deal of allusion to religion in her books. But it was never dragged in. It was the natural expression of her own point of view. In fact, there would have been a good deal more if she had not put a check on the natural impulse to speak of what

holds first place in the heart, is uppermost in the mind, and most valued in life. Her characters thought and spoke about religion as they did because that was how she thought and spoke, herself. It was, perhaps, rather an unusual way to think and speak in these days—but it was a good way, so she let them do it. It was not inartistic, as the conversation of people in religious stories invariably is, because it was spontaneous and natural, and such sentiments were an organic part of the characters. There was no "moral" attached to her stories, but she tried to write books that were, in themselves, a moral. Her aim was to make the way her characters dealt with situations an inspiration and encouragement to her readers. She hated the idea of a didactic novel; but she had no objection to her characters being a demonstrative lesson in how to live—how to live like the young carpenter of Nazareth, "in favour with God and man."

Hence her characters were not exactly the kind of people one meets every day, and their point of view was all their own. I don't mean just their point of view about religion or about moral questions, but their attitude towards each other and life in general.

Another ever-present aim of my mother's was never to write anything that might hurt any of her readers through seeming to slight their walk in life or their religious views, or any other matter upon which the human heart is naturally susceptible. To her there were no class barriers. From duchess to dustman she loved her kind. She sympathised very really with the members of all grades of society, and understood their point of view. Hence she had a sense almost of partisanship with people of every walk in life, and to have written anything that seemed to sneer at or ridicule any one of them would have been to wound her friends.

The same with regard to religion. She respected deeply any sincere belief, she sympathised with every religious enthusiasm. She would not, consciously, have treated lightly anything held sacred by another. I well remember her heartfelt distress when she received a letter of remonstrance from someone who thought she had meant to make a flippant allusion to something the writer and her co-religionists held sacred, and what pains she took to write and explain that her words had been quite inadvertent. She hated religious

intolerance, and never took it upon herself to judge anyone or his creed.

So much for the aims and ideals that she kept always in view. Some description of her methods, of the way she wrote her books, may be of interest.

First, to describe the usual procedure.

Her last book would generally have been out some little time. Then, quite suddenly, one day, a vivid scene would form itself before her mental vision—a complete picture, with well-defined characters and action, but so far unconnected with any story. It would be so dramatic in itself, that she would know it was the nucleus of a plot! She would bear the scene in mind, making no effort, however, to *invent* the story belonging to it.

Then, one day—perhaps in the very early morning as she lay awake, or during a long, dark run in her car, the original scene would, as it were, open the door of her "unconscious mind" and, without effort, the whole story would flow out (more as one remembers passed happenings, than as one makes projects).

In a moment her artistic sense would have grasped the situation and fixed on the psychological moment for the opening scene; and now

her brain would become intensely active, going through the whole story, scene by scene, devising the conversations word for word—in fact, making a book of it. That done she would be quite content: she had "got her book," it was as good as written.

Meanwhile the many and varied activities of her busy life might keep her for months from beginning to write. Then, one day, she would arrange to begin. She liked propitious circumstances just for making the start: after that, nothing mattered. So she would, perhaps, go abroad for a few weeks. The invigorating air, the sun and snow of St. Moritz, would fill her with boundless energy, and, sitting out in the sunlight, she would begin her book.

Once into the first chapter the story would flow on in an uninterrupted stream, so that just as fast as her pencil could move over the paper, so fast would her story grow. She never paused, never hesitated, but gladly, untiringly, wrote on and on, hour after hour, and sometimes far into the night. It would be, scene by scene, the story she had thought out months before.

Outward interruptions would in no way hinder the flow. People would go into her

room to ask her trivial questions, and she would lay down her pencil and enter with her whole mind into what they had to say. The person gone, she would take up her pencil and serenely re-enter the world of her book, in no way disconcerted. In fact, she liked us to feel that we could come in as we liked and that nothing would disturb her.

In the middle of a scene perhaps the dinner gong would ring, and she would leave her writing and come gaily in (always in very high spirits at such times), joining in the general conversation and in no way *distrait*. But she admitted, once, that it took a little readjustment of the mind to leave *her* world and come back into the other: for instance, if the summer sun was shining, with her, it was quite an effort to realise that, with us, it was November. And if her characters had just finished tea it was very difficult to come in with any enthusiasm for *lunch*!

As a rule she would not read aloud a single chapter of her book until the whole was complete; and she would not tell the story she had in her mind before writing it, for she had an idea that if she did she would never be able to write it. But as soon as the last word was

written, her one desire was to share her book with her family.

Always, first, she would read it right through to my father, from whom she was sure of the fullest appreciation and understanding. After that we, her children, with perhaps one or two old friends, would form what we called a "reading party," and gather round every evening, or perhaps twice in the day, while she read aloud her manuscript. It was an enthusiastic audience, and she loved us to make comments and conjectures.

She would put the manuscript away for a time, now; but before very long would begin the rather arduous task of copying it all out in ink, with her own hand. This she always did, for as she went she would make an enormous number of minor changes, finding a better word, improving a turn of phrase, revising the punctuation, inserting another paragraph or improving a conversation. She wrote a very beautiful hand, perfectly clear and quite uniform throughout the thousand pages of manuscript.

After this there would be a period of rest while the compositors got busy, and then would come the proof-reading. She insisted on reading *three* sets of proof—unusual with authors. First

the "galley"—long strips, in which she felt fairly free to make alterations. (She would sit long hours over this rather tiring work, and used laughingly to call herself a galley-slave!) Next, "page proof," where a very close revision was necessary, entailing minute attention, for this was practically the last opportunity for making alterations. Finally, she would read "plate-proof," to ensure that the thing was perfect; for she was intensely particular about every detail, every note of punctuation. That her book should appear with a single printer's error, a single blemish in her very pure English, would have been a cause of real distress to her.

At last would come the day of publication—a day of great rejoicing. She always visited her publisher's office (where she took a personal interest in every member of the staff), and there would be quite a little ceremony. First she would be presented with a beautiful bouquet of flowers—as a rule flowers of a kind mentioned in the new book. Then each member of the staff would come in, and she would have a friendly handshake, a few words for each, and an autographed copy of the book to give.

Then, taking the bouquet with her in the

car, she would pay a round of visits to her bookseller friends, receive their smiling congratulations, and see the piles of her new book, which they would assure her were fast beginning to diminish.

A few days earlier each member of her family would have received a copy of the new book, with some characteristic inscription from her on the fly-leaf; and now would begin the work of sending off copies to her enormous circle of friends.

Soon would come the interest of a fat envelope containing press-cuttings—the first reviews. The kind ones delighted her, for she loved appreciation, and since her book was like her child, to hear it praised naturally rejoiced her heart.

A genuine criticism interested her. But two kinds of review hurt her very much, and cast her momentarily into deep gloom: the crabbing sort, that did unfair things like quoting little bits out of their context, and then drawing false conclusions, making the book look ridiculous; and the spiteful sort, that emanated regularly from certain quarters, and that she felt were an attack upon herself and not a criticism of her book. Sometimes these contained mis-

THE CORNER HOUSE, OVERSTRAND.

In the Corner House Garden.

representations, almost libels, but she had made a rule never to reply to anything that appeared in the press, and she kept to her rule to the end. The full-page skit in *Punch* always delighted her; for she had a keen sense of humour, and appreciated genuine, good-natured fun, even at her own expense.

Finally there would be the letters from appreciative readers, many of which were to her a deep reward, for sometimes they told of difficulties overcome, crises passed bravely through because of her book.

They came from readers of every sort. I have before me a pile of such letters—so many and so charming that it is hard to know which to quote from. Here is one from an enthusiastic American reader that is typical of a great many:

"My Dear Florence Barclay,—I have read all your books, and through them I have learned to respect and love the author. 'The Rosary' is the most wonderful book that I have ever read, and I have read it more than ten times. Jane is the most beautiful character that a mind could ever conceive.

"You wonder, I know, why I should write across the ocean to the author of the book. The reason is this. Would you care to answer my letter, and my one question?

"Is Jane real, or is she your ideal of womanhood? She is my ideal. Please forgive me for so troubling you, but I care so much for Jane that if I found she was a real person my faith in this world would increase ten times."

Here is a letter in a child's handwriting:

"DEAR MRS. BARCLAY,—It may seem strange that I should write to you, but I feel as if I know you, through reading your books. I think 'The Following of the Star' is the most beautiful book I have ever read. The best part of the book, to me, is David's sermon on 'gold, frankincense and myrrh.' This book was the cause of my being confirmed, yesterday. We had a most beautiful service. It was the happiest day I have ever had, and I feel that I owe it to you.

"With love and thanks,

"Your little friend,

"_____ _____"

An English lady writes:

"Please pardon me for taking the liberty of writing to you, but I feel that I owe you a debt of thanks for writing that soul-stirring book, 'The Wheels of Time.' . . . Thank you so much for reminding us that we should give 'white roses' *now*. I believe everyone who reads your book will be more tender and considerate towards their loved ones, and more

ready to show love and sympathy to all—at the *right time*.

"For myself (after 30 years of very happy married life) I feel inspired 'to live up to the best that is in me,' and to do all the good I can *while* I can."

A Jesuit Father writes:

"Allow me to thank you from far-off Australia for the keen pleasure I got from 'The Rosary' and 'The Mistress of Shenstone.' Books like these are calculated to do a world of good. It must be an unappreciative mind, indeed, that could not fashion to itself a nobler ideal from the study of such characters as 'Jane,' 'Myra,' 'Jim Airth,' 'Sir Deryck,' 'The Duchess,' and 'Garth.' One loves even the macaw! May God spare you to do further work and much of it!"

The Secretary of a large religious institution in London writes:

"I always like to say 'thank you' when I receive a blessing from any one. Some few months ago I had the pleasure of reading your 'Wall of Partition.' There is a passage in it which entered into my very soul. These were the words: 'Ah, the ineffaceable, ineradicable memories of those early years, cut deep into the plastic mind of a little child! Those who guide and mould the cutting should remember

they are graving for eternity, and cut high and holy things; things which are noble and true.'

"'Graving for eternity.' These words were graved into my life after reading them.

"When I stand before my Bible-class of young men—'graving for eternity' rings in my soul.

"When I speak to the thousands of children, week after week, as I stand on the platform I hear a voice saying, 'Remember, you are graving for eternity.'

"I just want to give this simple testimony to the power of your words, and to thank God for inspiring you to write them, and for leading me to them."

Here is a letter in a lighter strain, but typical of a great many received. It comes from America.

"My dear Mrs. Barclay,—I do so want to tell you how much I enjoyed reading your story, 'Through the Postern Gate.'

"So charming, so sweet and tender! But my curiosity was so much aroused by the reference to those 'explosive buns.' Do tell me what they are and how they are made. I should dearly love to have the recipe if you can give it to me."

There is another letter asking for the name of "Jane's" tailor! And one, very serious,

asking for the true name and address of "Sir Deryck Brand," in confidence.

The following is written in the shaky writing of an invalid:

"I hope you will not think it an impertinence on my part to tell you what enormous pleasure, and far more than that, your book 'The Broken Halo' has given me. I am very ill—hopelessly, I know. I feel if I do live a few weeks more I ought and shall try to be a better woman for having read it. I only wish I had read it thirty years ago."

Thus writes a man:

"Your words have helped me tremendously in my daily life, and are a constant source of inspiration to look beyond the haze and fog of human conception and perceive the blue sky of happiness."

Here is a letter of thanks from a great invalid to whom my mother sent proof sheets of her book, having heard that holding a volume was very painful to her:

"I have so greatly enjoyed 'The White Ladies of Worcester' and do thank you most heartily for your very kind thought. I was able thoroughly to enjoy the reading without the extra suffering which holding a book entails.

. . . I like this latest work of yours the best. All the characters are so human—each a type of womanhood one meets constantly, though one wishes there were more of the 'Moras' and 'Hughs' and 'Mary Anthonys.'"

A young soldier writes to thank her for the great joy and benefit derived from reading "The Upas Tree":

"It was my privilege to read it out in Mesopotamia," he says, "in a little building taken over by the Y.M.C.A. It was on the banks of the Tigris, just outside Bagdad. We rested close by there after days of marching, days of bloodshed and want, in that far away, sun-scorched battle-area, and although books out there were very scarce, your glorious work was there, to the delight of all the boys."

Three sheets from South America give a delightful picture of the pleasure given by the books to a little mountain community:

"It is always good to know that you have made the way a little brighter, easier, lighter for other wayfarers, is it not? and because I think that it will give you in return something of the pleasure you have given to so many here, I write this letter to you. . . . After reading one of your books I feel that I want to be a better, stronger woman, with the self-life denied utterly, to meet life's actual duties, struggles,

temptations and sorrows with a braver, unfaltering heart, a heart in fuller harmony with the will of the dear Father, God, Who made and understands. . . .

"Your woman characters, my husband says, are as the best of Shakespeare's, with a soul on evidence. I am going to repeat a few sentences he wrote to me a little time ago, about 'The Wall of Partition.'

"'The book charmed me. It is true to nature. True in the man, true to the woman and womanhood. That a woman has been able to see, without despising, and to draw so exactly the weak side to a man's character, astonishes me; and yet, why? It requires a woman to do it. . . . The child that exists in manhood; and the tender, pitying, understanding, patient, self-forgetting mother-nature of womanhood, inherent in God's last and noblest work, are painted so delicately and so justly, as to give one often a thrill of admiration of the very art of it. Not only have I enjoyed the book but it has done me good—a lot.'

"We come into contact in our work with heaps of people of all sorts and conditions, and are glad to have books like yours to lend which 'touch the spot' and give the forcible message which we, perhaps, are unable to give in any other way. To grip your books I think the reader must look at them, not from the point of view of just superficial sentiment, but from the depths of human feeling. . . . The present time needs

the healthy representation of Christianity and its influence on everyday life, as you give it. Those who have eyes to see can recognise that your finest characters owe their very strength and beauty to the Christianity which has brought them through the veritable furnace of trial into the haven where they would be."

"We have a guest under our roof," writes a man in New Jersey, "who has become so deeply engrossed in 'Returned Empty' that for the last three hours she has been totally oblivious of our existence. But we quite forgive her, for we feel that she is in happy communion with some very real people who have crossed our threshold."

From many lands came these letters; from young and old, rich and poor. One that pleased my mother much was from a woman telling how she and her husband had been happily brought together once again by reading "The Rosary," after living for several years in separation. They felt they owed directly to her the joy of their mutual forgiveness and new understanding.

We have not, alas! the beautiful answers which my mother wrote herself to most of these letters from her unknown friends. There is, however, one case where her letter was returned by the post-office, an insufficient

address, apparently, having been given. Her letter is to two girls at Oxford:

"St. Moritz,
"Feb. 24th, 1913.

"My dear Friends at Somerville College,—Your delightful letter of the 15th has been forwarded to me out here in the snow and sunshine of the radiant Engadine heights, where I am writing my new book for the autumn.

"I am not supposed to write letters; but I cannot let a day go by without sending a few lines to tell you how much pleasure and encouragement you have given me.

"Yes, indeed I know how much it means that my books should have proved helpful to you in the intellectual life at college, so full of intense interest and fascination, and yet also so full of danger and temptation.

"I do indeed rejoice that my books have helped you to keep a firm hold upon simple faith, and to keep in steadfast touch with the deeper things of Life.

"I receive many letters from all over the world, but I can truly say I have never received one which has given me deeper pleasure or more genuine encouragement than yours. I should like to come and see you some day! Be sure you let me hear of you again. Now I am off up a mountain to sit and write in the perfect solitude and silence of these eternal snows.

"I could not start without sending you my loving thanks.

"May God's blessing rest upon your studies, and upon your whole life at Oxford.

"Believe me,

"Most faithfully yours,

"FLORENCE L. BARCLAY."

Such, then, is the history of the production of my mother's books, typical, more or less, of them all. "The Rosary," of course, has a rather different story, but I might here mention that the statement made repeatedly in the press that "it went the round of the London publishers before it was accepted by Messrs. Putnam" has no truth in it at all. It was not offered to a single London publisher, and only to one publisher in New York other than Putnam's.

I mentioned the way no interruption hindered the flow when my mother was writing. Almost more wonderful, however, was the way she could write anywhere and everywhere. She would carry her manuscript with her in a little leather case when we went on expeditions at St. Moritz, or elsewhere, and write at every possible moment. I remember seeing her sit down on a luggage barrow in a little Swiss

station and write on, while waiting for the train, quite undisturbed by her family's cheerful voices. I remember her coming to the race-course at St. Moritz to see the *skïjoring* races, and writing her book between the races, in spite of the crowd and the babel of many tongues, as people of all nationalities in bright coloured "woolies" seethed round her, discussing the events! Perhaps it was the absorption of the writer that produced a similar absorption in the readers. She would write in the train, on board ship, anywhere and at any moment. "The Following of the Star" she wrote at St. Moritz—some of it far up the mountains, during her long days of climbing. She wrote the whole of "Through the Postern Gate" in seven days, half of it on the voyage out to America, half on the voyage back. Parts of "The Mistress of Shenstone" were written on the vine-clad terraces above the Lake of Como. "The White Ladies of Worcester" she began sitting in the Druid Circle, near Keswick. She felt there was a sense of romance about the place, and had once visited it by moonlight, and felt deliciously creepy! Her last book, "Returned Empty," was finished in three weeks. It is curious to note that within a month

of its publication in England it had been translated into Finnish!

But on the whole the complete lack of fuss connected with her writing was its chief characteristic. It never separated her from the ordinary family doings, and a great deal of it was done simply in her writing-room in the little square, grey "Garden House" at Hertford Heath.

The only one of my mother's books which has as yet been filmed is "The Mistress of Shenstone." It appeared in America in February 1921. Only a week before her death she saw the "trade show" of the film in London, and was delighted with the very beautiful production, and Miss Pauline Frederick's perfect playing of "Myra." It is hoped that "The Rosary" will be given to the cinema public before long.

The song, after which my mother's book was called, had, when the novel appeared, outlived its first great success in America, and was looked upon in England as a semi-classical song. The year after the publication of the novel, 40,000 copies of it were sold! Its composer, Ethelbert Nevin, was dead; but fortunately his widow held the copyright. It

pleased my mother much to know this, and to hear that the success of her book was so greatly benefiting another.

Though "The Rosary" had been translated into six languages and the other books into several, French publishers had apparently thought it would not appeal to the French novel-reading public. In 1920, however, a beautiful translation appeared in serial form, in *Le Temps*. It was so well received that it has since been published in volume form, and French readers seem to have taken the book to their hearts. This pleased my mother, for it showed that the French public does not necessarily want the kind of thing usually associated with the idea of a French novel.

In 1912, some months after the publication of "The Following of the Star," my mother received a violent blow on the head, while motoring, which caused cerebral hæmorrhage and long spells of intense pain. For several months it seemed as if her creative faculty had been destroyed, and her doctors feared that this was indeed the case. Perhaps nothing could have been a keener trial to her than this so sudden cutting short of her work, in the midst of the full flood of her success. But

with all the faith and devotion of her courageous heart, she resigned herself completely to the will of God in this matter as in all else, and never repined or gave vent to regrets. At one time, so acute were the symptoms that her doctors took a very serious view of the case, and she was devotedly nursed day and night by her great friend, Miss Maud Burdett. The eventual recovery of her power of writing was one of the things for which my mother truly thanked God.

This recovery was brought about in a curious way. Whilst boating on the lake at Keswick my mother received a blow on the head from an oar. It caused her friends great anxiety, for they feared that it would bring back the more distressing symptoms resulting from her former accident. On the contrary, it proved to be the means of her complete recovery, and before long she felt her creative faculty fully restored. It was, indeed, a drastic treatment that could only have been applied, as it seemed, by accident. But my mother believed it to have been a providential accident.

My mother's reading of other writers of fiction had very little influence on her ideas

or literary style. She was not a very great reader, but this was more through lack of time than anything else, for she enjoyed a good novel immensely. Of the classical novelists Dickens was her favourite—and she had, in fact, a very great admiration for him, delighting in his books. Especially in the second half of her life, she read all the best novels that appeared.

The book which had the most real influence on her was, as I have said before, the "Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Barrett." These letters seemed to her to tell a perfect love story, and to reveal an intimate and perfect friendship that grew into an ideal love. All that she thought and wrote of love was tinged with the golden memory of the delicate, pure, and deep emotion of those two high souls, whose most precious secret was so openly revealed to the world when they had gone. If she sometimes made what looked like a very human passion in her characters into an almost spiritual ideal, I think "E. B. B." had a good deal to do with it! In the two poets, mature of character, deeply intellectual, the one a strong, restrained nature, the other intensely sensitive and reserved, love was almost a spiritual thing. Moreover, they were both possessed of a perfect

power of self-expression, so that their love-letters are literary gems.

It is, I think, this influence pervading her books that has puzzled some critics not a little. It is what one writer meant who commented on "the way in which she blended passion with the spirit of pilgrimage."

Such, then, were my mother's ideals and methods in the art of novel writing—an art which she looked upon as intended, *par excellence*, to please the people and elevate their conceptions of life, and not as existing merely for itself—art for art's sake.

It is not an exaggeration, I think, to say she wrote novels *ad majorem Dei gloriam*.

XII : THE WAR

THE War, with its heart-rending tales of tragedy; its periods of intense anxiety; the great wave of agonised emotion which swept over the world, could not but affect very deeply a heart so sensitive, so delicately attuned to human sympathy, as my mother's. This vast, shattering reality seemed to break the spell: the flow of romantic fancy was abruptly checked. For a time no more stories broke into her mind out of the great realm of imagination, for in the realm of reality human emotion was running high: men and women were actually doing what few romancers would have dared ask of the people of their own creation.

With wondering admiration she watched the gay courage with which men faced the reckless martyrdom; the hidden heroism with which their women bid them go, hiding through months and years the continual dread in their hearts.

Even had a plot occurred to her she could

not (so she said) have let herself become absorbed in a world of imagination. The poignant realities of the moment were too exigent in their demand for the heart's attention.

And so a year went by without the writing of a book.

It was, however, continually being represented to her that a book from her pen could do so much to cheer the sad, the anxious, the suffering; that she *ought* to try and meet the needs of the great public that counted on her.

No new plot, however, had occurred to her: nor did she want one to. For she felt quite unable to write of the War, to make copy out of this Gethsemane and Calvary of the human race; and yet to write of the old, quiet days of sunshine and peace, to describe English home-life as if there were no war—that could not be done, either.

Then a solution presented itself.

She had long had in mind a strange plot—its setting away back in the Middle Ages; its hero a Crusader; his beloved a noble lady of King Richard's court. Somehow, to write of those days of long ago, so different in every respect from the present, appeared possible, nay, easy—a relief. It would be a book with

its scene and interest far removed from the War, and yet in no way savouring of a callous forgetfulness. It would serve, perhaps, in a special manner, to distract weary, anxious minds. More and more the idea commended itself to her. And so it was "The White Ladies of Worcester" came to be written—begun in the summer of 1915 but not finished until 1917.

Meanwhile, she had produced two other little books dealing directly with the War—"In Hoc Vince" and "My Heart's Right There."

The former was originally a contribution to "King Albert's Book." The incident it described was a true one, the facts having been written home with a few crude details by a young officer, and recounted to my mother. The artistic possibilities of the story struck her at once, and its symbolic value. The writing up of this little bit of poignant realism offered her the relief of expression, and she seized it eagerly.

By the end of the War a dramatic and powerful war plot had occurred to her, and she had, indeed, begun to write the book; but the unfinished manuscript she left shows only a few chapters.

My mother's name is not connected with

any war activity in particular, nor her generosity recorded in the annals of any particular fund. Hers was a hidden and widely diffused kind of war service and charity. It was the numberless people hard hit by the War, but not coming in for the assistance of any of the organisations, who received her unstinted help.

How many broken-hearted wives and mothers found comfort in her friendship will never be known: for sympathy tendered by my mother was a thing consoling indeed. Her wonderful letters, her visits, the very real tears she could not restrain as she made her own another's grief were of that quality which, by truly sharing it, lessens the unbearable burden of a heavy heart.

Her younger son was in the Grand Fleet, and took part in the battle of Jutland, her elder son in Australia struggling hard to get sent back as a chaplain, but prevented by typhoid and its after-effects. Four of her daughters she gave up gladly to the service of the wounded, though for three it meant absence from home, with but short leaves at long intervals. The thought, however, of the work on which they were engaged was a source of continual joy to her.

She loved to visit the hospitals and spend an afternoon in the wards—and how different she was to the often tactless visitors, who would ply the men with conventional questions and give them nothing in return (unless, perhaps, a few cigarettes). She would go quietly round, staying longest with the worst sufferers—men who did not want to talk, but who wanted real sympathy so badly.

There was a man dying in a ward—half paralysed, his back one mass of shrapnel wounds. She asked if she might go behind the screen. She knelt by his bed, his poor cold hand in hers, and very softly she repeated a hymn she thought he would know—"Jesu, lover of my soul." He *did* know it, she felt sure, for though he did not speak, and could no longer see clearly, she felt his hand suddenly tighten on hers. When she stepped out of the hut into the sunlight the tears were wet on her face.

The cheery people sitting up in bed doing wool-work would delight in talking to her and showing her the artistic triumph on which they were employed. Some of them would write to her, and she had quite a correspondence with a man who had lost one hand and some of the fingers of the other.

My youngest sister, not being old enough for nursing, was acting as one of the cooks of the local V.A.D. hospital. My mother would often look in as she passed through the town on her way back from London. She usually presented herself at the kitchen door, where she would be sure of finding my sister. One day the door was opened by a blue-clad patient, a tea-cloth in one hand and a plate in the other.

"Who is it?" called a voice from within.

"*Cook's ma*," called back the patient, as he invited her in.

"'Cook's ma'—that is my proudest title!" she would say, with a laugh of pleasure at the recollection.

She loved lending her car that bevies of cheerful, blue-clad people might go out in it.

Once she went to Netley and spoke to the men on her Palestine travels, in the theatre at the Royal Victoria Hospital. She was much amused when she unwittingly called forth a burst of laughter by chancing to mention the Arabic word "baksheesh"—for to the men it was simply a bit of army slang (brought back from the East) and rather a catchword in hospital, just then. She found the men a delightful (and delighted) audience.

All through that difficult period she managed the housekeeping for her household, devoting to it much care and thought. She kept all the ration-books herself, and would go out hunting for food and come back joyful and triumphant, having secured a pot of marmalade or some other scarce item. Only housekeepers will understand the amount of work and time and thought all this entailed, but she insisted on doing it all herself.

At Hertford Heath the service of intercession held each morning at a quarter past nine meant very much to her. At it my father would read out the chief war news, which was followed by appropriate prayers. Thus the villagers who attended heard the news and were helped to view it rightly, and to commend their country to God's care in each new trial and danger.

The music at this little service was, of course, my mother's part, and she put her whole heart into it. It consisted of a carefully chosen hymn, and an improvised voluntary, in which specially consoling hymn tunes often merged into the strains of some patriotic air, or even of "Tipperary," which had become almost sacred to many anxious hearts, calling up, as it did,

the brave gaiety of our men, singing so light-heartedly as they marched to their death.

Often the second verse of "Abide with me" was sung very softly, kneeling, at the end of the service:

"I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless,
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness:
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me."

The way she played the beautiful, simple tune was full of the spirit of prayer—for by music she prayed very truly—and those who sang could not but pray, too. It was a prayer in the name of the men—the men out in the turmoil of blood and dust and flying shrapnel, finding it so hard to pray with their lips or from a quiet heart, but praying by their very life—and death. To my mother that verse meant infinitely much—whether it was in the little village church she played it, or whether she led it from her Leyton platform, thinking of the hundreds of husbands and beloved sons represented by that great crowd of her friends. And to those who joined with her in that prayer, prayed so simply on behalf of their men, how much comfort, trust, brave resignation and living hope was awakened or renewed!

There is one thing about my mother and the War that must be described—her air-raid experiences. For in air-raids she took the keenest interest, and (it must be admitted) almost enjoyed them!

The London-bound Zeppelins used to pass straight over Hertford Heath and return that way, too; and so did the Gothas. Every evening after dinner, during raid seasons, my mother would go out and walk round the house, making sure that not a crack of light was visible—for the Vicarage, with its many large windows, stood high on a hill and could be seen for miles around.

She had an arrangement with the special constable that he should bring her word as soon as he received the "warning." She always had an electric bell on a long cord hanging out of her bedroom window, and this he would ring if the warning came during the night.

She would get up at once and dress and go out to listen. When the distant guns began she would go quietly round and rouse her family.

It chanced that several of us were at home during the worst raid period, and I remember vividly some of those strange nights in the garden.

We would walk up to a high point where the long horizon could be seen lit up by continuous flashes and flickers, as the anti-aircraft guns kept up their barrage. This sight and the ceaseless crackle of the guns thrilled my mother. Then, as searchlight after searchlight shot its great arm of light into the sky and we knew the Zepp was near, her interest would increase, and she would count the rays of light, and insist on us coming to this and that point of vantage whence they could best be seen.

It was always she who first heard the distant hum and grinding whirr of the Zepp, and she would try and hush the laughter and talk of her family that we might hear too. And then, at last, it would be unmistakable, and we would have to admit that she was right—it *was* a Zepp, and coming our way.

The sense of danger seemed to exhilarate her, and nervous people simply could not be afraid in her presence. One of her first actions when the guns began was to hasten off to the bedside of a friend who was an invalid, and consequently dreaded these raids. But once the Zepp was near she would insist on us all keeping together.

And so it was that we came in for the wonderful sight of seeing a Zepp brought down.

The hum of the engine had seemed very near for some time; the searchlights were searching the sky wildly. Suddenly my mother cried:

"There it is—look, look!"

Sure enough, like a little golden pencil-case in the sky, we saw the Zepp—caught by the searchlight. The "archies" had ceased, and a moment later came the light-signal of an aeroplane above it. Then, suddenly, the whole Zeppelin glowed brilliantly and began to fall, growing larger and larger until it appeared a mass of flame, lighting up the pitch-black night so that (twelve miles away as we were) it would have been possible to read small print. Then, breaking in pieces, it fell more rapidly and was lost to view.

It was a wonderful and awful sight. My mother loved to describe it.

Two other Zeppelins she also saw brought down; but the experience that I most often heard her recount, and that filled her with the sense of joy at a great deliverance, was what happened on September 3rd, 1916.

Most of us were away from home, but she had insisted on my father, my youngest sister, and her secretary turning out, when the warning came. At 11 P.M. they heard the Zepp go grinding over, and its sound fade to silence. But

my mother felt positive it would return their way, and she and my sister continued to walk about out of doors, listening. It was nearly 1 A.M. when they heard it coming back. Soon it was straight overhead, the air seeming full of its terrifying hum. They were on the lawn in front of the house, with her secretary, and her chauffeur and his wife. Suddenly there was a sound like an express train rushing through the air. For several seconds they listened breathlessly. It was different to any sound they had ever heard before, and they could not guess its cause. Then a voice seemed to say in my mother's ear :

"It's a bomb."

Instantly she seized my sister's arm, and together they fell flat on the ground, while she called to the others to lie down. For several seconds (seeming to them an age) they lay thus, while the rushing, screaming sound grew louder and louder.

"Keep your heads down—we shall be *all right*," said my mother. Then came a deafening, bewildering, shattering explosion, shaking the ground, and quickly followed by a shower of stones, clods of earth, and pieces of metal. They lay still until the fragments had ceased falling, and four more explosions had veritably

rocked the ground on which they lay, and then, shaken and dazed, they stood up, unable to see in the pitch darkness what had happened.

The house was still intact, but on going in, it seemed full of broken glass and plaster. My father could not be found, and, with a sense of deep anxiety, my mother searched the night for him. She discovered him at last, searching for her, in equal anxiety.

The agonised whinnyings of a foal in a field at the back of the house drew them thither. So, by the yellow light of a lantern, the strange and horrible sight was revealed. A crater, 12 feet across, yawned in the little meadow; on its edge the shattered body of a mare, her foal standing in the crater badly injured; blood everywhere, and the foul smell of lyddite fumes filling the air. But through God's mercy that was all. No human lives had been lost.

At intervals of about 25 yards there were four more craters (not quite as large as the first). These were all among the houses, but wonderful to say not one bomb had hit a house: they had fallen in a field, a lane, and a garden and done no harm, beyond scattering a good many tiles and killing some ducks.

There were also an enormous number of

incendiary bombs; but these, too, had fallen where they could do no harm.

The lawn in front of the Vicarage was found to be covered with debris—stones, earth and bits of bomb—and yet those lying on the lawn had been untouched. A sharp, jagged piece of bomb was found within a foot of where my sister's head had been, emphatic evidence of the narrowness of her escape.

My mother firmly believed that this wonderful preservation was a direct answer to the prayer daily put up at the intercession service that the village might come to no harm from attacks by air, and be preserved through the mercy of God. In fact, the very evening of the raid, she had herself, at her choir practice, prayed that whatever danger might that night assail them, all might be preserved in perfect safety by God's almighty providence. Often she would remark how, had the hand that released those bombs been allowed to do so one second sooner, the largest one would have fallen upon the house, killing those within and probably those without, the remainder perhaps wrecking numbers of village homes. It filled her with a sense of trust and exaltation, and she loved to quote the 91st Psalm:

"He shall cover thee with his feathers, and

under his wing shalt thou trust . . . Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night."

Numbers of people from the neighbourhood came during the days that followed to see our crater, and my mother would delight in showing it off, and telling the story of the raid: "personally conducted tours," she would call them, and they became quite a joke. But my mother's attitude towards the raids was altogether characteristic: whatever was on hand she liked to do thoroughly; she loved to be in for every excitement; she always managed to find enjoyment in every kind of occurrence, and I don't think she would have missed that night of September 3rd for anything! She felt that in that hour she had truly shared in the danger ever assailing our men, and come very near to the real, terrifying meaning of *war*.

Shortly before the signing of the Armistice my mother became President of the East Herts Women Voters' Association, and gave the inaugural Presidential address at the very successful meeting held in Hertford. At this time she was pressed many times to stand for Parliament—not only by the women voters, but by many people who had the good of the constituency at heart. She was firm, however, in her refusal,

though personally she felt much attracted by the idea.

The last loving act of generosity that my mother performed before she was called hence was the erection of a beautiful stone cross in memory of the fallen heroes of Hertford Heath.

The original subscription raised for a memorial had only been sufficient to put up a brass plate in the church. But this never satisfied her. Something in itself beautiful, something more visible, must commemorate them; something standing among the people, their own; something they could look on daily and remember; somewhere where they could lay the flowers from their little gardens, as tokens of love for their boys. And so she chose and gave to them a great white cross; and it was put up on a grass plot at the entrance to the village—a high point, on the main road, and visible for miles around.

The beautiful ceremony of unveiling and dedication she planned herself, in every detail, with the utmost care and thought and love. Strangely enough it proved to be her last public appearance in the village that had so long been her home, for a few weeks afterwards my father and mother said good-bye to the parish, and during those last weeks she was already laid low.

The whole village—a thousand people—turned out for that service. A military band, and the ex-service men marching in fours, gave to the proceedings a martial note. But at last came a very touching little incident—unrehearsed, spontaneous, and so like my mother.

It had been agreed that after she had unveiled the cross she should step up and lay her laurel wreath at its foot, as a sign for the relatives of the fallen to come forward and do the same.

But when it came to the moment she suddenly felt she *could* not be the first to lay her wreath, for the stone shaft of the cross bore upon it names held by the women in that crowd, as wife or mother. And so, very simply, she crossed the open space, and sought out the mother of the first of our men to fall; and hand in hand with her, advanced to the cross. So, together, they laid their wreaths upon the step.

XIII: MUSIC

MUSIC to my mother was not a hobby, not an accomplishment, not even, one is tempted to say, a gift—it was more like a faculty, inborn, insistently demanding to be used, providing for her the very purest joy.

"Oh, no one *knows* what music means to me!" she cried one day, in a sudden burst of longing for sympathy. She realised, I think, in that moment, that music was to her what the faculties of sight or hearing are to others—necessary adjuncts to consciousness—only supplying, too, an objective wealth of glory and joy and revelation, so that it was hopeless to expect anyone fully to understand.

As soon as she could talk she could sing—sing in a rich contralto voice that was strange as coming from a little child. It developed, later, into a wonderfully beautiful voice, clear, flexible, and marked by the peculiar *ease* of its production—no sense of effort, of strain, or conscious striving after effect. It had, too, a remarkable compass—three octaves all but

two notes (from the low C to top A). Some musicians said it was the most beautiful contralto voice they had ever heard. The effect of her singing was enhanced by her depth of feeling and insight into the words of the song and the thought of the musician. She sang with her sympathetic understanding, with her heart, with her soul.

At one time she studied with Madame Blanche Marchesi. At her first lesson, as she concluded the song she had sung through before the great teacher—

"We will astonish the world!" cried Madame Marchesi, with jubilant enthusiasm. Her disappointment was great on discovering that the possessor of this magnificent voice, this radiant countenance and slight figure, was not a girl of twenty-three, but the mother of seven children, the busy wife of a country clergyman!

She cared little for applause, and was too busy with other things to sing much even at amateur concerts, and so it was chiefly those who came to the little village church who heard her voice soar up through the singing of the congregation she had trained so well. Though occasionally she would accept invitations to sing at concerts given in the Ware Town Hall, the Hertford Corn Exchange, or at Haileybury College, it

was mostly to her own children and at village gatherings that she sang. At her Leyton Bible Readings, at the Keswick Convention, wherever there was singing, she entered into it heart and soul, carrying with her a tune book, so as to be able to put in the alto or tenor as the congregation's singing seemed to demand.

Though hers was, really, a contralto voice, she could sing in the clear, flute-like tone seldom found except in a boy. She used to sing the hymn she loved so much, "Veni, Creator Spiritus," and round which "The Rosary" is written, to Attwood's setting, modulating her voice into the clear, high quality of a boy's voice, with most beautiful effect.

It was one of the greatest trials of her life that her heart illness left her unable to use her voice except in the low register.

Her speaking voice itself was wonderfully musical—whether used to make an audience of 5000 hear, or in conversation with one person. In public speaking she could always make herself heard without effort, in the largest buildings. And in conversation it was the tone, the musical quality of her voice, that imparted the idea of sympathy and understanding to those with whom she spoke, as much as her smile and the straight,

intent look in her eyes. Strangers whom she addressed could not but be arrested simply by her voice. Its tone and its magic effect are part of my earliest memory. One word from her could still the most raging storm of temper and restore peace not only outwardly but also within. To the end of her life her speaking voice was quite unimpaired.

Her use of musical instruments was very wonderful. The music she could draw out of the poor little one-manual organ at Hertford Heath was unbelievably beautiful; and the effects she obtained with the few stops and pedals was (as she used laughingly to say) a real feat of juggling. Her great dream was to be able to put a really beautiful organ into the church. But when the time came when such a thing would have been possible she denied herself this inexpressible joy because she felt it would be money spent simply to satisfy her own longing. The organ was suitable enough for the needs of the church, and probably a more elaborate instrument would only have been a difficulty to the simple village organist who would be her successor.

It was, therefore, a joy none of us could really understand when (one winter at St. Moritz) she obtained leave from the priest at the Catholic

Church to play as long and as often as she liked upon his extremely beautiful new organ, with its electric wind, three manuals and variety of stops.

Evening after evening she would go round and play for hours, whilst we and some of our cheerful friends would leave outside our toboggans and our *skis*, and sit below in the church, listening. It was quite dark save for the tiny red glow of the sanctuary lamp; and in that holy stillness her music would steal soft and sad, or swell forth triumphantly and speak of all that was in her heart.

The story of how she first began to play is very remarkable. She was about four when, to her joy, she was put on a music-stool and her piano lessons began. She had sung hymns for a long time, and she at once asked to be allowed to learn to play hymn tunes. Her teacher was quite shocked at such presumption, and Mrs. Charlesworth also agreed that little Benny must keep to five-finger exercises for a long time before she could try anything so difficult as hymn tunes.

"If they won't teach me hymns," said Benny to herself, with characteristic determination, "I'll just play them without." So she scrambled on to the music-stool and began to play hymns perfectly, by ear, with correct harmonies! This

precocious and rebellious action was looked upon as almost naughty, seeing she had been told to play only exercises, until someone realised it was rather wonderful, and Benny was given leave to play hymn tunes occasionally!

At Limehouse there was a beautiful organ—that of the Great Exhibition of 1851. This my mother used to delight in playing. At the age of about fifteen she composed a whole oratorio upon it. When at last it was finished, and her little sister was in raptures over it, she invited her mother to come and hear. But, alas! Mrs. Charlesworth was quite unmusical herself, and showed little appreciation or surprise at this result of weeks of enthusiastic work; and, somewhat deflated in spirit, Florrie realised that most people don't understand.

It was not only, however, in composition and the gift of playing by ear that my mother excelled, as a child. "I well remember," writes her old governess, "at the time when she was fifteen, her playing from memory the whole of Beethoven's Grand Sonata, with the Funeral March, whilst I sat by her side, score in hand, to see and correct any wrong or imperfect rhythm or expression."

With equal ease she taught herself to play

the violin before she was seven and the 'cello after she was fifty!

The hymn tunes she composed are full of life and originality: they inspire any congregation by their lilt and swing and joyousness, and literally force it to sing with expression by their inherent expressiveness. It was typical of her regard for the good work of other people that she would never compose a tune to words which already had an adequate tune, a tune of *their own*, a tune that did them justice and gave full expression to their sense. But in the case of "Nearer, my God, to Thee," though she loved the grand old tune always sung in America to "President McKinley's favourite hymn" (as she often called it), still, she felt that it no more suited the words than did the rather mournful dirge usually sung in England. So she composed a tune with the same soaring, singing quality as the words.

But, alas! she would compose these tunes, teach them to her children and at her Leyton gatherings, accompany them with full harmonies, and then never find time to write them down. Happily the *airs* are well known, and an effort is going to be made to get them adequately harmonised.

LIMPSFIELD COURT, SURREY.

She also composed several songs full of real music—but these were never written down, either. One, however, to some beautiful French words :—

"Si vous saviez comme je vous aime,"

she taught with every note of its elaborate accompaniment to a great friend of hers ; thus it will be possible, in time, to give it to the world. Her dream was to hear it sung in the Queen's Hall, accompanied by the orchestra she loved so much. She would describe to us how here and there would come in "the sweep of the violins," and just how Sir Henry Wood would conduct it !

Of all the great old masters, Beethoven was the one she loved and understood best, though of Bach she once wrote : "I think the music of Bach is the most completely soul-satisfying of all church music."

In many ways my mother's head was curiously like Beethoven's—only instead of being sad and stern her expression was full of joy, and merely calmly resolute. Her hair, at first dark brown, and latterly a beautiful shining silver, was so thick that she could not bear the weight of it grown long. It stood up on her head

true musician-fashion. When she was in high spirits it did so more than ever ; but in depression, disappointment, or sickness it would fall back, all its energy abated.

That great pageant-play, "The Miracle," performed at Olympia in 1912, delighted my mother. She went to see it many times, especially enjoying the organ music and the choruses sung by the realistic mediæval crowd. But it was not only the music she loved. The old legend, the lesson it taught, the wonderful acting of the "Madonna," the artistic contrasts of now a surging multitude, now a single little figure on the floor of the vast cathedral—all appealed to her. I have heard her describe the whole play, going minutely through every scene, acting again the various parts so that you seemed to see them, and every now and then sitting down to her piano and playing bits from the score, until you seemed to hear the organ itself.

She often played the "Miracle" music as a voluntary in church.

She enjoyed all Barrie's plays immensely, from "Peter Pan" to "Mary Rose." Especially in "Mary Rose" and the other equally weird

productions, she would find deep meanings and inner significances. She would often say Barrie was one of the few geniuses of our day. Her enjoyment of his plays was of that absorbed, keen sort that one seldom meets with except in children. "Peter Pan" moved her to tears, for to her it held a very pathetic meaning that the children did not see.

It was in the last few years of her life that she found in Miss Phyllis Lett a friend who could fully understand and share in her musical enthusiasm. This friendship was a very great delight to her, and did more than words can say to make bearable two years of almost continuous and very terrible pain, rendered harder by the impossibility of writing under these circumstances. Thus wrote Miss Lett after my mother's death: "The more I dwell on the thought of all she brought into my life in the last two and a half years, the more utterly thankful I am to God for the great gift of her special friendship."

My mother went with her to many concerts in various parts of the country, and it was in her company that she learnt to know and love Sir Edward Elgar's music.

Perhaps in all her life she enjoyed few things as she enjoyed the Three Choirs Festival at Worcester in 1920.

The setting of the beautiful cathedral which she loved so much (both on account of its associations with her childhood and with her book) enormously enhanced for her the beauty of the music, which, in that atmosphere of worship, in that setting of Gothic grandeur, expressed the full religious depth and spiritual delicacy put into it by the great Catholic composer.

She was moved beyond words by "The Dream of Gerontius," and the tears ran down her face at the great chorus:

"Go forth upon thy journey, Christian soul."

Not long before her own brave soul went forth upon its journey she went through all the score, describing to me just how it had all been, on that day at Worcester, and again the tears were in her eyes at the memory.

Lover of music as she had been all her life, playing the old composers with a wonderful depth of understanding and expression, and finding her keenest delight in orchestral concerts and oratorios, she said that Elgar's music was a revelation to her. After hearing a great per-

formance of "The Apostles" at the Elgar Festival in Leeds (1920), she said she did not know there was such music on earth.

Much as she loved "The Dream of Gerontius," "The Apostles" meant even more to her, because of the words. "It is *true*," she would say. "The one is a dream—the imaginary dream of a mortal—the other is taken from the inspired Word of God."

She had always attended the Handel Festival, but after the last one she suddenly exclaimed: "Why do they have this great orchestra and chorus, this great hall, and give a three days' festival of the music of a dead German—great though he was—when we have in our midst a far greater composer, a living genius. Why don't they give a great Elgar Festival?"

She admired her friend's voice beyond that of any singer she had ever heard, and took the keenest interest in all her appearances in London, going to these concerts whenever she possibly could. Miss Lett's wonderfully successful recital in the Queen's Hall, on December 2, 1919, was, though the public little knew it, arranged as a "birthday treat" for my mother. She had talked of it for months with the greatest delight, and when the time came entered into all the

arrangements with the greatest enthusiasm, and was overjoyed at its success.

She was greatly moved by the Bristol Choral Society's rendering of the "Elijah," in 1920, and especially by the wonderful pianissimo effect obtained on the words, "There came a still small voice," which occur in the chorus, "Behold, God the Lord passed by."

Altogether, these last years of her life were truly a feast of music, and she herself began to play Beethoven again, as of old, only now with greater understanding and power than ever before.

XIV: BACK TO LIMPSFIELD AT LAST

THE thought of Limpsfield had always been enshrined in my mother's memory, and when the time came for bidding farewell to Hertford Heath, she determined if possible to settle there. She felt it would be to her a true *going home.*

Strange to say, almost the first house she visited was on the very border of her beloved Limpsfield!

It was in spring that she saw it first, its picturesque garden, with smooth lawns, thick yew hedges and red brick walks looking very beautiful in the first burst of spring flowers. The little wood sloping down below the rhododendron hedge was, as she put it, "a mist of bluebells," and she altogether set her heart on buying the house and bringing her family to it. After some difficulty the purchase was accomplished, and during the autumn and winter of 1920 she visited the spot very frequently, delighting in its beauty, its wealth of roses,

and the sense that it was so near the scenes of her childhood.

In the autumn of 1919 she had undergone a very serious operation in hopes that it would cure an internal trouble that had long caused her some of the most acute pain that it is possible to suffer. This trouble she believed to have been brought on by her long hours of writing—for it was a complaint said by medical men to be found more commonly among writers than in those more actively employed. The operation, though apparently successful, only relieved her for a time, and by the following summer her old symptoms occurred again.

The brave way she bore this wearing pain was very wonderful. She would seldom cancel engagements or disappoint those who counted on her, and would travel by car or train and speak on platforms when she was suffering very severely. At home she would keep about constantly, always bright and gay, anxious to help other sufferers, and arrange everything for everybody's happiness and comfort, quite regardless of her own condition; hiding her pain so successfully that few people realised what she was going through or the real heroism of her life, during those months.

March 4, 1921—Six Days Before the "Home Call."

Not long before Christmas she had an attack of bronchitis. The coughing made her pain infinitely worse and also affected her heart, so that during January she was very ill indeed, and her doctor doubted whether it would be possible for her to be moved from Hertford Heath, in February, as had been planned. She was, however, very anxious not to delay longer, and on February 10th she and my father left the place that had been their home for nearly forty years, and took up life at Limpsfield Court, Oxted.

My mother's extraordinary strength and old recuperative power reasserted itself, and before long she was about again, delighting in the beauties of the new home; of the house she had had redecorated, planning every minutest detail herself; of the garden; of walks over the common, and visits to the well-remembered scenes of her childhood.

She was full of plans and projects for the future: all she was going to do to make the place a source of pleasure to others.

It was characteristic of her that she set aside the very best room in the house, with its big bay-window overlooking the magnificent view, as what she called "the guest room."

"Our Lord once sent to a friend of His and said, 'Where is *My guest chamber?*' and He was given the large, upper room—the best in the house. So I want the best room in my house to be His guest chamber," she said. And she determined to use this room in order to give busy, tired workers a restful holiday.

She was so keen that we should all like the new home, that it should be a place of rest and peace for my father, after his long life of hard work. She talked so gaily of all we would do. And yet I believe that ever since Christmas she knew she was going.

She said nothing directly which might have distressed us, and yet, looking back, we cannot but remember many significant little things. One day as she walked on the common with my sister she suddenly remarked:

"At least I can feel I'm leaving you all in this beautiful home."

Neither of them alluded to this mysterious remark, made almost unconsciously.

Writing to one of her choir members on February 2, with regard to the farewell service on the last Sunday at Hertford Heath, she said, "The closing hymn will be 'Abide with Me,' and the closing voluntary 'Shepherd of Souls.'

I want that to be the last thing I play on my little organ—'O lead us Home.'"

Leyton had had its farewell, though no one realised it, in the splendid great gathering for the twentieth anniversary, when a beautiful presentation was made to my mother—a grandfather clock, an exact copy of that at Hampton Court, containing very beautiful Westminster chimes. Since that time she had not been well enough to hold more than a few Bible Readings, and the last one she took, closing them down for the time, had indeed had about it the atmosphere of "good-bye"—though it had been a particularly happy time. Although unable to be with them, her thoughts often turned to her Leyton friends, and she wrote to several of them. One of them, as she opened a letter from my mother, remarked:

"I've had my farewell from Mrs. Barclay."

And yet no one entertained the thought that she was going. It was quite impossible to imagine life without her. And although she was really so ill, her courage, her gaiety, her sense of abounding life, seemed to keep at a distance even the thought of death.

And then, quite suddenly, pain unimaginable seized her, and she could no longer keep about.

Her bronchial trouble returned, and her heart was also affected. For three days she lay in agony. A specialist was sent for. He said an operation must be performed without delay.

And still, somehow, no one thought she was going. It was, I think, her sheer force of will that would not let anyone admit the idea of death, though to herself it must have been very really present. She had never feared death : to her it was a passing to a fuller life, and, best of all, a passing into the presence of Christ her Lord, into the fuller love and understanding that would come with the fuller vision. Always she had been quite ready to die, and so there was no anxious preparation. Now her thoughts were all for others—my father, her children, her household.

The day before the operation she was kept under morphia, and the pain was much less severe. She was full of her usual pluck, cheerfully discussing the operation, and the question of what kind of anæsthetic should be used on account of her heart and the congestion of her lung.

So, to the end, she was smilingly gay.

Always she had loved and often sung Tennyson's " Crossing the Bar " :

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark.

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crossed the bar.

One day she suddenly exclaimed, as she struck the last chord of the song: "Oh, I do *hope* there will be 'No sadness of farewell' when *I* embark!" And her hope was fulfilled: there was no sadness, no farewell. She welcomed the doctors with her brave, radiant smile, and then she just went to sleep and never woke up again.

. . . . .

The last time she had heard the "Elijah" sung, after "There came a fiery chariot," she

said how it made her long for a chariot to come and take her away. She was so young and strong in spirit that she could not bear the thought of growing old. And so, in a way, her wish was granted, for those few brief days of intense agony, ending in so swift and sudden a passing, seemed indeed as if a fiery chariot had whirled her away from our midst into the Presence of God.

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